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COVER: Ursula Andress as Ayesha, by Bill Chancellor

## Scarlet Letters

With other magazines wasting space on the same old jazz, it was a revelation to buy Scarlet Street #41 and find something new and fresh and exciting-The PICTURES OF DORIAN GRAY, by Lelia Loban and Richard Valley. This may be the best thing Scarlet Street has ever published, which is saying really something! The Hurd Hatfield and Helmut Berger interviews (by Jim Lysaght and David Del Valle, respectively) were perfect companion pieces, too. More fresh ground was covered with Ms. Loban's remarkable article Empire of the Imagination: She Who Must Be Obeyed. A pleasure, too, to see the return of Horror Italian Style, which looks to be in good hands with Troy Howarth. The icing on the cake was the Curt Siodmak interview by Kevin G. Shinnick and Terry Pace. Fascinating and maddening-in other words, Siodmak!

Congratulations on the best magazine being published today! In fact, congratulations on absolutely the best magazine published ever!

Joyce McCain Argyle, NY

I just received Scarlet Street #41 and it was certainly worth the wait. Thanks to reader Craig Roberts for reminding me that I have been delinquent, and for your kind response. I plead guilty to neglect, caused by an extra heavy workload during the last year because of the release of my films on DVD.

I personally agree with reader John Hitz about ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN, but I also think that Bob Hope's version of THE CAT AND THE CANARY was infinitely superior to his GHOST BREAKERS and should be listed in that context. ONE FRIGHT-ENED NIGHT was only a minor B movie made by Mascot Pictures in the mid-thirties. Old dark house thrillers, some straight and some with comedic touches, were a staple of the independent film production companies in the early sound era. One of the best was Monogram's THE THIRTEENTH GUEST, with Ginger Rogers and Lyle Talbot.

The News Hound, in reporting on An-chor Bay's VHS release of HORROR HOSPITAL, describes it as coming from "the folks at Hallmark-the sleazy British producers, not the greeting card company." Actually, the producers of this British film were Antony Balch and my-self. We first released it in the USA through the American distribution company Hallmark Productions, which was famous for putting out MARK OF THE DEVIL and offering cinema patrons free vomit bags.

Thanks to Jeff Thompson for his appreciative review of CORRIDORS OF BLOOD, now on DVD, but it's not a little girl who is involved in an amputation scene; Boris Karloff amputates the leg of a full-grown man. He also performs minor surgery on the little girl's infected leg and cures her.

I loved the interview with Curt Siodmak because he always took credit for the accomplishments of others and contemptuously dismissed anyone who disagreed with him. If he spoke with tongue in cheek, it was not always apparent. There is no doubt that he created Lon Chaney's "persona" in THE WOLF MAN, but he didn't invent the idea of the werewolf. We all know that Universal made the first werewolf movie, THE WERE-WOLF OF LONDON, with Henry Hull some years earlier. It was infinitely superior to the Chaney film, which suffered from severe budgetary constraints de-

spite its "all-star" cast.

The interview with Hurd Hatfield, and the accompanying article on The Pictures OF DORIAN GRAY, are fascinating. I had the pleasure of meeting Hatfield in the late forties, when a European producer whom I was representing planned to make an updated version of CRIME AND PUN-ISHMENT in France. We tried for Montgomery Clift and Claude Rains to play the leading roles, but they both turned it down. Rains, who had worked with Hatfield in Michael Curtiz's THE UN-SUSPECTED, suggested that he would be ideal casting. Raymond Massey was willing to undertake the other role, but Hatfield, though he couldn't have been more charming, also turned it down. By then the financing had collapsed and the picture was never made. Recently, TCM showed DESTINATION MURDER on television, which was a bizarre gangster story costarring Hurd Hatfield with Albert Dekker. They both played coldblooded villains and Hurd was very effective in a most uncharacteristic role.

## WANTED! MORE READERS LIKE



Phyllis Coates



I learned more about SHE than I ever thought was possible from reading Lelia Loban's terrific article EMPIRE OF THE IMAGINATION. I look forward to Part Two and wonder if she will make reference to L'ATLANTIDE, a fantasy about the lost city of Atlantis, which was written by the famous French author, Pierre Benoit, who obviously was influenced by Rider Haggard's work. In L'ATLANTIDE, the lost city is situated below the Sahara Desert and also ruled by a ruthless and seemingly immortal beautiful woman. whose name is Antinea. It was made as a silent movie and then G.W. Pabst produced the first sound remake in French. English, and German versions, all of them starring the lovely Brigitte Helm of ME-TROPOLIS fame as the ruthless queen. The French legionnaire who becomes her lover was played by Pierre Blanchar in the French version and John Stuart in the English one. In a typical Hollywood remake in the forties, Maria Montez played Antinea and Jean-Pierre Aumont was her lover. George Pal's ATLANTIS. THE LOST CONTINENT appropriated the title for a sword-and-sandal epic that had nothing to do with Benoit, but Edgar Ulmer once more remade L'ATLANTIDE in Italy in a modern version called JOUR-NEY BENEATH THE DESERT, starring Haya Harareet and Jean-Louis Trintignant. By then, the poor lost city under the desert found itself in the middle of a nuclear testing site! Fortunately, Rider Haggard's Ayesha has been spared such indignities, at least up to now.

Richard Gordon New York, NY

The News Hound replies: I send my apologies to Mr. Gordon, who to my knowledge has never done anything the least bit sleazy.

Okay, I'm hooked! For a few years I've stood at the newsstand flipping through Scarlet Street and occasionally bought it. Then I bought a back issue, then couldn't wait until the next issue came out, then I just bought it without even flipping through it I guess that means I really love what you're doing! I even spotted my name in Forry's column once. We've been friends for 30 years. So this is just to say thanks and to ask a favor. Please, lose the gray tones behind the pages of copy. I find it hard to read Also, your graphic designer puts ghost images and bats to add design to the

Continued on page \$



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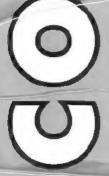














































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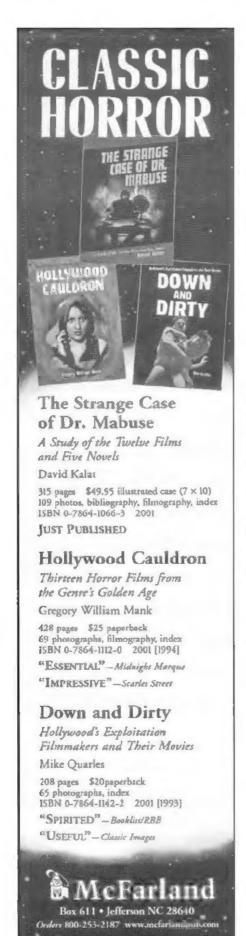


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#### SCARLET LETTERS

Continued from page 4

page, but it's very annoying. As a graphic artist myself, I know the temptation to noodle with the computer, but that is "gilding the lily."

Shel Dorf San Diego, CA

We try to keep Scarlet Street easy to read, Shel, and have lightened the occasional gray background. Believe me, it's not a temptation to gild any lilies, because it's a lot of extra work; still, we think it's necessary and the majority of Scarlet Readers love our look.

Richard, you'll recall that I used a copy of Scarlet Street in my movie PLAYING BY HEART. I've also noted the very nice comments you've given the movie from time to time in the magazine—and I

greatly appreciate it!

I just finished the 10th Anniversary issue and must say it was really terrific, especially the "DORIAN GRAY in the movies" overview—very well-researched, with invaluable information. I think that's what elevates your publication above all others. It's not your standard zine—not that there's anything wrong with those!—but that rare combination of



Ryan Phillippe and Willard Carroll on the set of Carroll's star-studded PLAYING BY HEART (1998).

entertaining presentation with academic import. (Hope that doesn't sound too pretentious!) Anyway, you get my drift.

I wonder if you've ever considered covering Indian (Hindi) movies. I was in India two months ago, saw a recent release in a Madras movie theater, and am now hooked for life. I've bought innumerable DVDs over the past few weeks and Sunday afternoons have now become Hindi day in my house. The best of them (and, as I'm certain you're aware, they make more movies per year than any other country) are wildly entertaining. Close in spirit to the innocence and giddy fun of our sixties movies (before we lost both our innocence and ability to make giddy fun movies), they have incredibly beautiful casts and settings. For some reason, Indians are enamored of Switzerland so there's almost always a scene shot there. (I'm not making this up!) And, of course, they all have musical numbers, some of which are genuinely spectacular. Not every movie is a classic-actually, of the 30 or so I've watched, I'd say three are objectively very good movies on any scale. An amazing number are available on DVD from a variety of US mail order sources. As a bonus, almost all of the newer releases have English subtitles. (And if you think the subtitles are a riot on some Hong Kong movies, wait till you get an eyeful of some of these howlers!)

Anyway, I don't think many publications, if any, have done much of a recent overview, history, etc. It seems very fertile territory and the availability of the movies might make it even more appealing for your readers.

Willard Carroll Los Angeles, CA

It's certainly a great suggestion, Willard, and we'll see what we can do with it. Coincidentally, you'll find an Indian version of SHE covered briefly in this very issue!

The interviews simply blow me away! I loved the Hurd Hatfield interview by Jim Lysaght and David Del Valle's Helmut Berger interview is the kind of no-holdsbarred thing other magazines don't have the guts to run. Isn't it time for a book collection of Scarlet Street interviews?

Jennifer Meddick San Diego, CA Yes, indeed, it's about time....

Scarlet Street #41 is an absolutely magnificent issue. THE PICTURES OF DORIAN GRAY is a stunning piece of research and quite mesmerizing. Congratulations to both Lelia Loban and Richard Valley. FIVE FINGER EXERCISE: THE BEAST WITH FIVE FIN-CERS is a lively review by Ken Hanke. I knew nothing about Robert Florey's film career, so I was quite interested in Ken's appraisal of his overall body of work. The Helmut Berger interview by David Del Valle was absolutely hypnotic-you can actually hear Helmut Berger talking, David gets to the essence of the man-but, David, can we assume that Helmut was not very faithful to Luchino Visconti? The Curt Siodmak interview by Kevin Shinnick and Terry Pace captures a highly opinionated man, who is actually great fun to read. The genesis of FRANKEN-STEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN is a hoot and a holler!

Of course, the letters are always great reading, as are the book reviews. (Richard Valley's review of Frank Dello Stritto and Andi Brooks' Vampire Over London was quite wonderful.) By the way, the photo selection throughout the magazine is quite striking—who does all the work? Raymond Banacki

Raymond Banacki Brooklyn, NY

We often get pictures from contributing writers, Ray, but most of the photos are chosen by Ye Little Olde Reditor and managing editor Tom Amorosi.

Richard, it was indeed a thrill meeting you at the Chiller Theatre Convention this past April, in as much as I always admired your publication. Your recent Scarlet Street cover story on Dorian Gray pushed me into conversation and I can't help think that dear Hurd Hatfield had something to do with it. We were friends for nearly 30 years!

Truly, what a delight it was reading that issue, which was full of nostalgia. I

# Frankly, Searlet

on't be afraid of Logo! It's as harm Dless as a kitten—or "as harmless as kitchen," as the Monstrous Medved Brothers once claimed the late, great Bela Lugosi said in Ed Wood's BRIDE OF THE MONSTER (1955)! Anyway, this is just our playful way of telling you Scarlet Streeters that a few changes have been made here and there in our 10th year of publication, but trust us-it

won't hurt a bit!

Actually, the logo has been changed a number of times over the years. The first logo lasted all of one issue, the second from Issue #2 through #9, and the third from #10 through #41, with variations in color. The main reason for changing it again is to increase layout possibilities on our covers. That Big Red Box sometimes got in the way.

Speaking of covers, Bill Chancellor did a bang-up job on She Who Must Be Obeyed for this issue! We've featured Bill's fantastic work on the covers of Scarlet Streets #36, #39, and #40, and you can bet he'll be back in the future, where most of you will be spending the

rest of your lives. (Seems I'm channelling Ed Wood today!)

Sharp-eyed Streeters will notice another change this issue-namely, the Dreaded Price Increase. The last increase (then, as now, of a single dollar in the good of USA) was back in Scarlet Street #27, and since then the post office has gone hog wild with price increases and so have the companies providing paper and the printers who print on it. We've always taken pride in giving our audience a good show, and when it came down to a choice between charging another buck or cutting down on our page count, well, we decided to give the buck a fly. No, sir, no one will ever be able to accuse us of not giving a flying buck . . . !

There's something else new in this latest issue of Scarlet Street, or rather "someone's else new," in that we've a number of new writers joining us. Let's extend a warm welcome to Harry Long (whose music column always delights in Classic Images), Duane Butler, Tom Soter, Ron Morgan, Anthony Dale, and SPFX mag publisher Ted A. Bohus, who once made the mistake of using managing editor Tom Amorosi, former pub Jessie Lilley, and Ye Reditor in his film VAMPIRE VIX-ENS FROM VENUS (1994).

In case I missed mentioning them during last issue's celebration of a Scarlet Decade, I want also to extend a hearty



handclasp to recent (and hopefully future) contributors Jim Lysaght and David Del Valle for adding immeasurably to our coverage of THE PICTURES OF

And now, on with the show . . .

suppose I'll be dating myself, but reading the roster of Dorian Gray productions, I can happily say I've seen most every one, including the Joffrey Ballet production with Dennis Wayne. Now, he was indeed perfection! I had met Bob Joffrey on various occasions through a dear and great friend of mine, Larry Kert, whom I'm sure you'll remember from WEST SIDE STORY fame. He and Bob were close friends and I have such wonderful memories of those days-what parties!

l did like the Jeremy Brett version, but hated the portrait. The Peter Firth version I did like very much. At that time, I was Peter Firth crazy. Unfortunately, Peter has lost overwhelmingly what the gods bestowed so long ago. Following a matinee of AMADEUS on Broadway, he left the theater and returned to England. This was not exactly a professional act and so Eq-



uity dropped the Sword of Damacles and ended his New York career.

In the interview with Hurd, he speaks of the original 1945 drawings which he owned. I'm enclosing a shot of me holding one of those originals. The cat statue I had seen for so many years. If I may be so bold as to make a major correction, Hurd died on Christmas Day, December 25, 1999, not December 29. He was visiting a friend for Christmas Eve. He stayed over and subsequently passed away in his sleep on Christmas Day. He was truly one of a kind and I am baffled and angry that the Academy Awards neglected to mention him during the memorial slot of the Awards presentation. Whoever does their research?

I did a film some years ago that resulted in a sort of Dorian Gray portrait, the closest I ever got to the title. It is still up in my closet and I'm terrified to see if it has altered!

Craig Dudley Sheepshead Bay, NY

Scarlet Street #39 includes the first part of an interview with Curt Siodmak, one of the genre's most important film writers. No one will ever say that Mr. Siodmak was an obsequious or insincere man, for he was definitely candid in his remarks about Val Lewton, Bela Lugosi, Lon Chaney, etc. I disagree with many of Siodmak's opinions, although I loved his brief jab at Nancy Davis, a bland actress married to a bland actor who became a dreadful president. Siodmak's unbridled frankness reminded me of the Scarlet Street (#26) interview with another candid nonagenarian, actor and author David Manners.

Speaking of authors, Forrest | Ackerman's tribute to Siodmak in The CRIMSON CHRONICLES was fine, though in retrospect the final paragraph is poignant indeed. There will be no 100-candle birthday

cakes, as Curt Siodmak passed away on September 2, 2000, at the age of 98. Gone but not forgotten.

Timothy M. Walters Muskogee, OK

Congratulations on a terrific issue. Scarlet Street #41 has to be one of the very best Scarlet Streets ever-rivaled only by the sublime GODS AND MONSTERS/ BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN ish (#30) and the DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL issue (#25).

Paramount among the many delights: Leila Loban and Richard Valley's superb article on the silent DORIAN GRAYs. This is what film scholarship is supposed to be-meticulous research and handsome wordcraft. It's one of the most entertaining and informative examples of film history I've read in a very long time. I can hardly wait for the subsequent installments. Hats off, as well, for the concluding segment of the Curt Siodmak interview and for the Hurd Hatfield piece. More proof that Scarlet Street does the best celebrity interviews in the biz!

Mark D. Clark Columbus, OH

I want to thank you and your staff for the kind mention of my book Uneasy Dreams in Scarlet Street #39. I have been aware of Scarlet Street since my friend Dick Klemensen inadvertently outed me in your letters column several years ago. Dick was far more upset about it than I was and apologized to me quite needlessly. I was glad because it brought Scarlet Street to my attention and I have been a fan of your upfront attitudes ever since.





When I was writing Uneasy Dreams, a friend of mine made the suggestion that I be less obvious about my sexuality in some of the text. He thought it might be off-putting for some of the horror film fans. I pointed out that Scarlet Street certainly didn't pull any punches and neither would l. That said, I want to respond to one of the comments in your review of my book and show how the author is very much at the mercy of his publisher. Your review mentioned that at times I stepped outside the parameters I set for myself. This is the one criticism that has surfaced in even the most favorable reviews. In the first version of Uneasy Dreams that I submitted to the publisher, I had included an "appendix of related titles" at the end. It included about 20 films that were made either before or after the 1956-1976 Golden Age. I felt that these movies should be mentioned because they had a direct connection with the films listed in the main text. I had also completely indexed the book with this appendix in mind. McFarland returned the manuscript to me and insisted that these films be incorporated into the main text. I argued the point, but they were adamant and offered no reason other than that was the way they wanted it done. Needless to say, I had to restructure and re-index the entire book, which was a nightmare. I then asked if these films could be singled out within the text to show that they were not within the time frame specified. This was also denied without apparent reason. The only con-

cession I was given is a sentence in the Preface stating that "Sprinkled throughout are a handful of films which were made either before or after the time period." I have always felt that McFarland's decision was a wrong one and apparently most reviewers tend to agree.

Gary A. Smith Los Angeles, CA

Strange are the ways of publishers. Wait a minute—I'm a publisher! I recommend Uneasy Dreams to all our readers. It's funny, but we never intended Scarlet Street to be a sexual trailblazer. We just felt that many of the folks responsible for the films, books, and TV shows beloved by horror fans were gay, that this fact informed their work, and that there was simply no reason not to acknowledge it in never dreamed that such a sensible decision could be the cause of so much controversy, and yet hardly an issue goes by of some other publications without someone bitching and moaning about gay subtext and how they're sick of it. Well, what can I say, except—grow up!

Just to let you know that Scarlet Street is not alone in being besieged by the legions of Lex Barker fans, although the letters you receive are apparently more florid—or less edited? Is there some social trend afoot here to which closer attention should be paid? And what is it about Barker's feet? Any fool can see that it's Lex's pecs that are worth a sonnet or two.

Harry Long Lebanon, PA

A trend afoot about feet? What kind of heel would want to start a thing like that?

Your magazine is really the best of its kind. It has a lot more class than the others. Also, I liked the letter Mr. Michael Thomas wrote about Bela Lugosi's Ygor. THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN is one of my favorite Frankenstein films due to Bela's performance.

David Reeser Martinsburg, WV

Enjoyed Scarlet Street #41, especially the Curt Siodmak interview. Very off the cuff, candid, and witty.

I wanted to make mention of something concerning the SHE DVD review. Although it is a very sharp transfer of a film once almost impossible to find, the Kino version is missing an entire reel! It would fit in exactly between chapters 10 and 11 on the DVD. In it, Tanya explores the vast corridors of the palace in search of the injured Leo. She sneaks into the private chamber of She, and speaks with her about Leo's recovery. Although the removal of this scene really does not hinder the storyline, it does remove some foreshadowing of the reincarnation aspect of the story, which is hinted at in SHE's dialogue. Following this is a scene between the high priest and Holly, in which the former almost spills the beans about the flame of life and its whereabouts, as well as the immortality of She. All told, there's about eight minutes missing from the film.

The saddest part of the story is that a private collector who owns a very good

16mm print of the complete version, offered his materials to Kino after the VHS tape appeared in the hopes that they would incorporate the missing footage into the DVD. They declined

Jim Doherty Ch.cago, IL

Wow! I can't believe how your staff can cram so much information in one magazine! Let me throw out my Reader's Digest, Entertainment Weekly, and Rolling Stone magazines and just keep every issue of Scarlet Street around. Scarlet Street is all the entertainment I need'

Loved the review on the James Bond Collection mentioned in Issue #41. Of course, I loved Troy Howarth's Horror Italian Style. I was in Bologna, Italy, for a while, and I remember those classic Italian horror movies. They were as exciting as Italy's spaghetti Westerns Boris Karloff in the 1963 BLACK SABBATH—ah, can't get any better than that! That movie gave me goosebumps!

THE PICTURES OF DORIAN GRAY is a real classic piece. The 1890 novel by Oscar Wilde has given birth to some marvelous movies and I hope Hollywood will do another adaptation of this horior novel. Seeing the portrait age while Dorian remained youthful still haunts me to this very day!

Paul Dale Roberts Elk Grove, CA

I realize that after each issue of your magazine is published, you must receive

a zillion letters such as mine However, I would like to try your patience just one more time.

Usually, I am neither a reader of your magazine nor devotee of this particular genre of motion pictures. However, I could not help but notice the headline of Scarlet Street #36: Phyllis Kirk in the HOUSE OF WAX. Your headline caught my attention because I really enjoyed Miss Kirk's portrayal of Nora Charles on the fifties televis.on series THE THIN MAN It was one of my favorite programs and I eagerly look forward to the time when it will be retelecast on cable or available on videocassette.

As you might imagine, I particularly enjoyed the interview with Miss Kirk and the story about the television series I am also delighted that Miss Kirk is fine and I am certain that she appreciates the remembrance in your magazine. As I have indicated, I have not been a regular reader of Scarlet Street. However, I will be looking for it on the magazine racks at the better bookstores for similar nostalgic articles in the future. It has been very much appreciated.

W.Iliam B Anderson Richmond, VA

Just delighted, and excited to see that Scarlet Street's hidden agenda includes the wild, wacky and erotic world of foot fetishism! Your readers may want to know that the new teen horror film FI NAL DESTINATION includes a very cute young guy dying -in his bare feet! His

death throes include several shots of him wiggling his toes!

Of course, hunky Johnny Depp did a rather graphic barefoot scene in THE ASTRONAUT'S WIFE, which was the high point of the entire movie. The film also features several closeups of Charlize Theron's well pedicured tootsies!

Perhaps other readers can write in and let us know what other horror films show cute guys in their bare feet! Of course, Lon Chaney Jr's barefoot appearances as The Wolf Man don't count. Chaney was n't cute! I realize, of course, that I am now also promoting a hidden agenda, and bringing sexuality to fandom. Perhaps we can hold a prayer vigil at the next convention so that our so es can be saved!

Chris Winters Hoboken, NI

Thank for dropping us this—ahem!—footnote, Chris We always try to print one heartfelt, serious letter per 18540

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Yes, kids, it's the *Scarlet Street* Slightly Mangled Special. We have in our vaults some issues with miner defects: price tags glued on the covers, a folded page, a gypsy curse scrawled on the classifieds... nothing too grim, but enough to render them unsuitable for sale at the usual rate.

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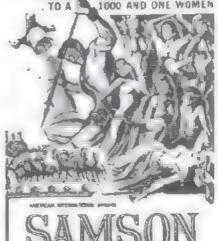
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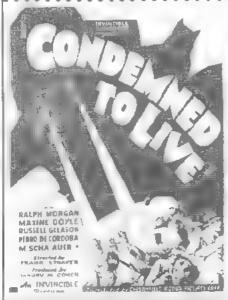
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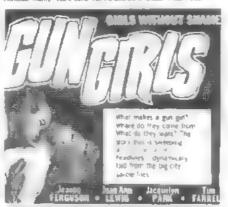
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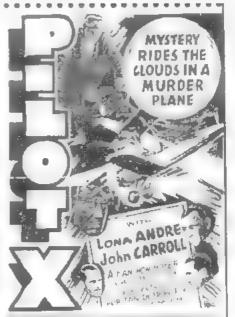
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THIS OFFER POSITIVELY ENDS AT THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT, NOV. 30, 2001.

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## HOUND

Pall into The Hound's den once again and grab a folio of facts on upcoming fall frights and frissons. Forward, fellow fiends .

**Now Slaying** 

Lovely young Leelee Sobieski is in double trouble in September, starring in two big-screen thrillers—JOY RIDE from director John Dahl (THE LAST SEDUC-TION), and THE GLASS HOUSE, the fea-ture debut of talented TV director Daniel Sackheim (THE X-FILES) Also in September, Eliza Dushku (BUFFY's vampy villainess Faith) stars in the supernatural shocker SOUL SURVIVORS from Stephen Carpenter, writer/director of 1981's THE DORM THAT DRIPPED BLOOD

A heap of Halloween horrors cram the cinemas in October Johnny Depp, Hea ther Graham, and Ian Richardson star in FROM HELL, a Jack the Ripper retelling coscripted by Alan Moore, based on his comic-book series. The William Castle remake 13 GHOSTS materializes, featuring Shannon Elizabeth (SCARY MOVIE) and F. Murray Abraham Director Ernest Dickerson (DEMON KNIGHT) presents the horror flick BONES, starring Pam Grier and Snoop Dogg HALLOWEFN THE HOMECOMING brings Jamie Lee Curtis back to Haddonfield, Illinois for a final (?) fling. And, last but not least, Cassandra Peterson, alias Elvira, busts onto the big screen once again in EL-VIRA'S HAUNTED HILLS costarring ROCKY HORROR's Richard O'Brien Hollywood is notorious for juggling release dates, so check your local listings for confirmation

## Déjà Views

Surprise-there are actually some intriguing prospects among Hollywood's never-ending supply of sequels. As The Hound mentioned previously, Warner Bros. has two BATMAN followups in development BATMAN: YEAR ONE, a flashback tale based on Frank Miller's graphic novel series, and BATMAN BE YOND, a live-action version of the futur-1stic TV cartoon show. Now added to the Batting lineup is CATWOMAN, a spin-off feature starring Ashley Judd as Batman's feline foe

TERMINATOR 3. RISE OF THE MA CHINES is set to start shooting this fall, with Arnold Schwarzenegger scheduled to share the screen with robotic rivals Vin Diesel (PITCH BLACK) and Famke Janssen (X-MEN) The script is by John Brancato and Michael Ferris, writer/producers of NBC's late, great paranormal show THE OTHERS

THE MATRIX RELOADED is the first of two sequels to the 1999 action hitboth in production simultaneously All the main players are back on board with star Keanu Reeves, including writer/directors Larry and Andy Wachowski.

Of course, there are plenty of remakes in the works—some promising, most doubtful. Fans of Hammer's 1973 kung-fu hortor epic LEGEND OF THE 7 GOLDEN VAMPIRES may consider hara-kiri on hearing that a comedy remake is in devel opment, starring Tim Allen Another possible Hammer re-do, THE DEVIL RIDFS OUT from director Joe Dante, returns Christopher Lee to his original role of Richeleau PLANET OF THE APES lead human Mark Wah.berg headlines THE



The Frankenstein Monster (Glenn Strange) is back on DVD in a series of new releases from Universal.

TRUTH ABOUT CHARLIE, director Jonathan Demme's remake of Stanley Donen's stylish 1963 Hitchcock imitation CHA-RADE. An urban gangland version of Fritz Lang's M is being planned, starring rapper DMX And—believe it or not— Hong Kong action director John Woo is bringing back TEENAGE MUTANT NIN-JA TURTLES. Make of that what you will Soup, perhaps.

## **Novel Ideas**

Horror and fantasy fans will see some high profile literary adaptations in the aters in the near future. Sean Connery and Paul Newman are set to star in the Warner Bros production THE DAMNATION GAME, based on Clive Barker's novel Stephen King's Dreamcatcher will become a Castle Rock film scripted by William Goldman (MISERY) and produced and directed by Lawrence Kasdan (BODY HEAT) TIMELINE, based on the Michael Crichton tale about time-travelling archeology students, stars DRACULA 2000's Gerard Butler (who is rumored to be the next James Bond) under Richard Donner's direction. THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING, the first in director Peter Jackson's lavish trilogy of Tolkien adaptations, debuts in December with subsequent installments scheduled for 2002 and 2003. Wes Craven has a new big-screen version of Robert Louis Stevenson's The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde on tap. Director Frank Darabont (THE GRFFN MILE) will soon be busy helming adaptations of Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 and The Martian Chronicles OUEEN OF

THE DAMNED, based on Anne Rice's 1988 Vampire Chronicle, will be released by Warners in the spring, and Rice's novel The Mummy is being reanimated as a feature project by James Cameron. Jack Finney's fantasy Time and Again, which was recently adapted into a stage musical (see last .ssue's column), might be back on track as a Uni versal feature through Robert Redford's

South Fork Pictures

### On the Haunted Horizon

SIGNS is the title of writer/director M. Night Shyamalan's next supernatural thriller, to be released next year by Touchstone. This next opus by the auteur of UNBREAKABLE and THE SIXTH SENSE concerns the appearance of crop circles on a Pennsylvania farm. Rumor has at that Mel Gibson will star

The movie version of Andrew Lloyd Webber's PHANTOM OF THE OPERA may finally be unmasked. Variety reports that a sing through of new Webber-penned tunes for the Warner Bros. movie occurred in London last spring A new adaptation has been completed by Ben Elton, who is a veteran scripter of TV's BLACKADDER and Webber's collaborator on the current West End musical THE BEAUTIFUL GAME Now all they need is a budget, a cast, and a chandelier.

A big screen version of the cult TV series THE PRISONER is likely the next project for TOMB RAIDER director Simon West. West is a huge fan of the 1967 Patrick McGoohan series, and wants to retain the flavor of the original, planning to do location work at Portmerion, the Welsh resort that was the original Village. Once the script is ready, West plans to appreach McGoohan to play a role Russell Crowe is the rumored frontrunner to portray Number 6.

GLADIATOR may have spurred a return to ancient historical epics. SILENCE OF THE LAMBS screenwriter Ted Tally has been hired by producer Dino De Laur-

Continued on page 16



TAB: Say, Roddy, have you seen the swell Discussion Boards over on the Scarlet Website? You can sign on and talk about classic Universal Horrors, Hammer Films, Sherlock Holmes, Charlie Chan, Alfred Hitchcock, Tarzan of the Apes, The Thin Man, Jack the Ripper, and just about anything else that comes to mind! Why, heck, you can even talk about sexual subtexts in our old pictures...

RODDY: Subtexts? What subtexts?

Hot Dog! You asked for 'em, you got 'em—and they really take the cake! Nothing holds a candle to the brand new Discussion Boards at ...



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# HARD DAY'S FRIGH

## Zacherley in Pepperland

## by Richard Scrivani

They say (and we all know who "they" are) that there is faces every only six degrees of separation between ourselves and now and aganyone we can conjure up For instance, think of any indiain, show-vidual and we should only have to make one or two coning a meetnections to link us to that person through people we al- ing between ready know. Some unlikely combinations can spring up him when this theory is applied, and I ran into one not long ago: Zacherley and The Beatles!

A few weeks ago I was enjoying the recent Varese Sarabande CD ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN (music from the original fifties TV series), nostalgically recalling practically every note, when up came a cue ("Spreading Misterioso") that seemed doubly familiar. I couldn't figure out why. Then it clicked in—it was the music used in the background for the "Roland" segment featured in the video THE ZACHERLEY ARCHIVES! I quickly called Zach (pictured below with his favorite mag) and played it to him over the phone, expecting him to remember it. He didn't, of course, but he added a very interesting factoid.
"You know who picked out all that music?" he asked

"It was none other than Richard Lester!"

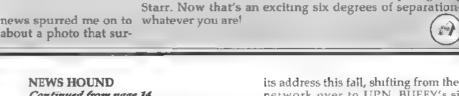
Lester, as everyone knows, was the director of the Beatles' first two films, A HARD DAYS NIGHT (1964) and HELP! (1965), as well as the antiwar film HOW I WON THE WAR (1967), featuring John Lennon. "He worked as the music director and was in charge of the music library at WCAU in the fifties," Zach continued. "He worked on the cowboy show ACTION IN THE AFTERNOON, and also ROLAND. He was already talking about leaving and moving to England so he could move on to bigger and better things." (It was Zacherley's casting as an undertaker in one episode of **ACTION IN THE AFTER**gave birth to his more durable "Cool Ghoul" persona as Roland and, after his move to New York, Zacherley.) This

ing a meetand Ringo Starr, which Ringo looks delighted to be chatting with our favorite hor-

ror host. "Oh, that was from a party, probably through WPLJ, for the release of his latest album." (John Zacherle, as New York fans remember, enjoyed a lengthy stint as a disc jockey, first on WNEW-FM in the late sixties, then at WPLJ in the seventies.) "The interesting thing is that Ringo loved "Dinner with Drac' and still knew all the words. The record, as I've mentioned, was banned in England, but he sure heard it. He said they all loved limericks in those days, and the song was really a collection of about five limericks."

Outlawed in the British Isles because of lyrics considered "too gruesome" (how things have changed!), "Dinner with Drac" was likely heard by Ringo on one of the many pirate stations broadcasting offshore and outside the jurisdiction of the BBC. One of the most popular, "Radio Luxembourg," was mentioned more than once by the Beatles during early interviews with the American press.

So the next time "they" underestimate the impact of our favorite merchant of menace, remind them that our man Zach worked with the Fab Four's future film director when the Liverpool Lads were still in their teens, and that his hit record from 1958 reached the ears of a young Ringo





entilis to script an elaborate biography of Alexander the Great, possibly to be directed by GLADIATOR's Ridley Scott There's also a competing Alexander project at Warner Bros., tentatively starring Jude Law. It will be interesting to see whether either of these films acknowledge Alexander's relationship with lover Hephaestion amid all the trumpeting elephants and butch Macedonians.

Sunnydale Doings

The hit TV series BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER changes

its address this fall, shifting from the WB network over to UPN, BUFFY's sister show ANGEL, meanwhile, has been renewed for a third season by the WB and remains on its original network. As for dear departed Buffy, The Hound suspects she'll be resurrected quite soon in new sixth-season adventures, which are rumored to include an all-singing episode (the horror!) and a visit by Shannen Doherty (the horror), herself recently departed from the cast of CHARMED

In other BUFFY news, creator Joss Whedon will adapt the show as a Saturday morning animated series to premiere on Fox in the fall of 2002. The proposed BUFFY cartoon sets The Slaver and her pals back at Sunnydale High for more



Zach

Hellmouth highks. Acclaimed comic-book writer Jeph Loeb is coexecutive producer. Longtime comics fan Whedon has also found time to write a series for Dark Horse- -an eight-issue cycle entitled FRAY, about a far future slayer. It debuted at local comic shops in June

And Mr Whedon has still more up his spooky sleeve. He's planning a spinoff show to star Anthony Steward Head in his role as "slayer watcher" Rupert Giles. Whedon and the BBC are developing the six-episode miniseries, tentatively titled THE WATCHER, in which Giles solves occult mysteries in his native England.

An alert to BUFFY newbies the FX cable channel begins weeknightly reruns in September, beginning with the very first episode

TV Frights for Fall

TWIN PEAKS with werewolves? That seems to be the atmosphere surrounding WOLF LAKE, the new CBS fall series from producer John Leekley (KIN-DRED THE EMBRACED). Lou Dia-

mond Phillips stars as the sheriff of a Pacific Northwest town plagued by mysterious wolf attacks. Hope he's got his silver ammunition handy

SMALLVILLE is the WB network's new fall show blending the SUPER-MAN legend with the sci-fi teen angst of their drama ROSWELL (which, like BUFFY, is migrating to UPN in the fall). Former fashton model Tom Wel ling stars as Clark Kent, the Smallville high school student with a super secret Kristen Kreuk plays Clark's crush Lana Lang, Annette O'Toole (Lana in 1983's SUPERMAN III) plays Martha Kent, and DUKES OF HAZ-ZARD star (and erstwhile Broadway performer) John Schneider plays Jona-MATED SERIES) appears as industrial-

ist Lionel Luthor, father to the prematurely bald Lex (played by URBAN LEC END's Michael Rosenbaum)

Other shows debuting this fall include THE TICK, Fox's half-hour, live-action comedy based on Ben Edlund's comic book, and ENTERPRISE, UPN's latest in the eternal STAR TREK franchise. Returning in the fall for another season are the Fox shows DARK ANGEL and THE X-FILES (minus David Duchovny), the WB network's CHARMED (with Rose McGowan of SCREAM joining the cast), and the monster buster romp SPECIAL UNIT 2 on UPN Fox has canceled FREAKYLINKS and X-FILES spinoff THE LONE GUN-MFN, and ALL SOULS and 7 DAYS are missing from UPN's fall schedule

Stephen King's ominous presence will be felt throughout the new TV season. ROSE RED, an original King-penned miniseries about a haunted mansion, airs on ABC in February. UPN is readying their mid-season replacement series THE DEAD ZONE, based on King's 1979 novel, starring Anthony Michael Hall, Mich ael Moriarty, and Nicole de Boer Marguerite Moreau portrays Charlie McGee, the firebrand of King's Firestarter, in the Sci-Fi Channel miniseries FIRESTARTER

THE NEXT CHAPTER, which also features Malcolm McDowell and Dennis Hopper (Sounds like Sci Fi is hoping to spin off its own "supergirl" series a la BUFFY, DARK ANGEL, WITCHBLADE and ABC's new spy chick show ALIAS )

Esteemed science fiction author Ursula K LeGuin will be almost as well-represented as King this coming season. The Arts & Entertainment Network presents a new production of THE LATHE OF HEA-VEN, and the Sci Fi Channel plans miniseries adaptations of Earthsea and The Left Hand of Darkness. Also coming up on Sc.-Fi: a long form presentation of Kim Stanley Robinson's Red Mars, and a two-hour telefilm of The Illustrated Man, scripted by

author Ray Bradbury
EARTH ANGELS is the tentative title of a proposed NBC series being developed by Anne Rice. The show, in which angels protect humanity in a cosmic battle between good and evil, will hopefully progress further than Rice's last TV pro-



Before Metropolis, there was SMALLVIILE. Tom Welling (Center) stars as the precostumed had for \$29.98 than Kent John Glover (the voice of Boy of Steel, with Kristen Kreuk as Lana Lang The Riddler on BATMAN: THE ANI and Michael Rosenbaum as Lex Luthor.

ject-the CBS ghost cop series RAG AND BONE, which never got beyond the 1997 pilot movie starring former Superman Dean Cain and Robert Patrick, Coproducing with Rice on EARTH ANGELS is genre veteran Inania St. John of VR.5, THE VISITOR, and ROSWELL

New York City-area horror fans of a certain age will fondly recall the Saturday night monster movie showcase CREA-TURE FEATURES on WNEW TV Channel 5 (Announcer Lou Steele, who hosted the show as The Creep, sadly passed away earlier this year ) Now the pay cable sis ter channels HBO and Cinemax are taking up the CREATURE FEATURES mantle with a series of newly produced horror movies inspired by the old Sam Arkoff AIP programmers of the fifties. The series starts this fall and includes updated ver sions of THE DAY THE WORLD ENDED, HOW TO MAKE A MONSTER, THE SPIDER, and TEENAGE CAVEMAN.

The Wicked Stage

Frank Wildhorn, creator of Broadway s shuttered pop musical JEKYLL & HYDE, debuts his newest stage production, THE MUSICAL DRACULA, at Southern Cali forma's La Jolla Playhouse this fall. Composer Wildhorn is joined on the project by SUNSET BLVD. Tony winners Christopher Hampton and Don Black provide the book and lyrics respectively. Preview performances of THE MUSICAL DRAC-ULA begin October 2, 2001; opening night is scheduled for October 14. For more information, visit www lajollaplayhouse com or call the box office at 858-550-1010. Atlantic Records is slated to release a CD of the score sometime this year

The West End's long long running ghostly play THE WOMAN IN BLACK had a brief Off-Broadway run in June and July at the Minetta Lane Theatre. Despite its untimely New York departure, this wonderfully eerie play continues to be a fixture at The Fortune Theatre in London, and is also being staged at Houston's Alley Theatre (713-228-8421) through Au gust. (The television version by QUA-TERMASS scribe Nigel Kneale is worth

catching, too.)

## The Home Video Vault

Universa! Home Video serves up five monstrous double features new to DVD sinister siblings DRACULA S DAUGHTER/SON OF DRACULA, allstar soirees FRANKENSTEIN MIETS THE WOLF MAN/HOUSE OF FRAN KENSTFIN, Ygor doubleheader SON OF FRANKENSTFIN/THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN, Kharis combos THE MUMMY'S HAND/ THE MUM MY'S TOMB and THE MUMMY'S GHOST, THE MUMMY'S CURSE, and the toothsome twosome WERFWOLF OF LONDON/SHE WOLF OF LON-DON Each classic coupling, sadly lacking the deft documentaries and superb audio commentaries produced by horror expert David J Skal, can be

Anthony Hopkins' grisly return engagement as HANNIBAL (and don't say Hannibal who?) is now available on VHS and in a special DVD edition from MGM/UA Also brand new to DVDa widescreen edition of the original IN VASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS (Republic), Clive Barker's 1990 horror epic NIGHTBREED (Warner Bros.), John Schlesinger's 1976 driller thriller MARA-THON MAN (Paramount), a boxed set of the SCREAM trilogy (Dimension), and the 1966 BATMAN mov.e (Fox), featuring audio commentary by Adam West and Burt

Ward Zowie!

In September, Fox releases DVD boxed sets of THE OMEN trilogy (\$99 98) and THE FLY (\$29 98 each for separate double-feature sets of the fifties and eighties versions). Fox also debuts DVDs of PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE, THE LFGEND OF HELL HOUSE, and a special edition of Mel Brooks' YOUNG FRANK ENSTEIN Paramount meanwhile, premieres the George Pal doomsday epic WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE

STAR WARS EPISODE ONE. THE PHANTOM MENACE comes to DVD in October in a two-disc special edition that includes over six hours of supplemental material Universal unwraps THE MUM

Continued on page 19



## The Rise of the House of HARRINGTON

## Curtis Harrington Meets Edgar Allan Poe

## Reported by Ken Hanke

orror/fantasy filmmaker emeritus Curtis Harrington—a figure too long absent from the genre-is marking his return to the form with his new version of Edgar Allan Poe's 1839 classic "The Fall of the House of Usher." Scarlet Street's Richard Valley and Tom Amorosi unched with Harrington at this year's Fanex convention in Baltimore, where he told them about his new film. Realizing that this was news of some note to genre fans, they set up this interview especially for our readers

Scarlet Street: What's "The Fall of the House of Usher" about -or rather, what's your film of it about?

**Curtis Harrington:** First of all, the title is USHER, not FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER. It's based on the famous story of Edgar Allan Poe-an adaptation that I wrote and directed It's a short film, running 36 minutes. In my opinion, when people take Poe's stories and try to expand them into feature length, they viti ate the stories very much. Novels asually lend themselves better to feature filmmaking. With this film, I've tried to duplicate the essential short format. The unusual thing about this adaptation is that I've brought it into the contemporary world. The story takes place in modern contemporary times.

SS: Did you shoot on tape or film?

CH: I shot it on 35mm film. I'm in the post production area now. I'm waiting for my composer to finish the score, and I hope to do the fina, sound mix before the end of August. He's a young composer He came to me and said he admired my films and wanted to do a score and pick up all the expenses. It's a synthesized score, but it sounds pretty good It doesn't have the fullness I'd like, but then it's a short film it's more of a chamber film, so it's as well it has a chamber music score to it. Incidentally, the cameraman on USHER is Gary Graver, the cameraman who worked with Orson Welles in his last years. He worked on Welles' fina. film that has not been finished yet, THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WIND, and he also did F FOR

right hand on the film. I hope to have the first answer print

ready in the fall. People at the American Cinematheque have promised a premiere screening

SS: What plans do you have for it afterwards? CH: It's going to be a festival piece. That's the main venue for such a film. I assume it will be entered in some of these short film festivals that are around and also the short firm division of other festivals. I hope it will stimulate festivals to show a retrospective of some of my other films in connection with USHER.

SS: That makes sense Who s in the film?

CH: I appear in it I play Roderick Usher There are no names in the cast. You know, I began my career many years ago making short 16mm films on my own. This is exact.y the same kind of film.

\$\$: Do you have any plans to release USHER on tape or DVD, so that people who don't get to film festivals will get to see it?

CH: Yes, eventually. I hope I can have a little cottage industry and have a website-a little mail order business making it available. I d like to make it available on video, definitely

SS: Perhaps this will lead to you being able to film more of your long-cherished projects

CH: Stranger things have happened, yes. You make something and it stimulates new interest. Those stills I gave to Rich-

ard-one of them is me made up as Roderick Usher, and the other is a very amusing candid picture of me at work on the film, all made up and in costume, but setting up a shot with the camera And th s is strangely apt, be cause I play Roderick Usher as a recluserather as he is in the story-but a modern recluse whose eccurtricity it is to dress in the style of the 19th Century An amusing incongruity, 1think

SS: Are you please with the film?

CH; Yes, I'm pleased. I've shown it to a few people very close friends-on video. It was edited on the AVID, so I have a video copy of it with temporary sound effects and temporary music and titles. I've had a favorable response. So I'm pleased about that.

SS: Well, we look forward to seeing USHER

one dav

CH: Well, you will that's for sure! After I left Baltimore I traveled for the rest of the month. I went to Philadelphia where I visited the Poe house, and that was a very interesting experience Then I went to Manhattan and out to Long Island to the Hamptons, and then I went to Boston. And while I was in Boston, I had a meeting with the people at the Harvard Film Archives, and they're interested in possibly doing a retrospective and a showing of USHER SS: Wonderful! You certainly sound enthustastic about the entire project

CH: Yes, well, it's a very personal film I have used the story and the situations to tell, in my own way as a creative enterprise, my musings-whatever you want to call it-dealing with the themes of art and death. I use poetry as a metaphor for art in general in the film, but it is intended as a metaphor The film is not about poetry It's about art, though on the surface it's just about poetry.



## Night of Dark Shadows

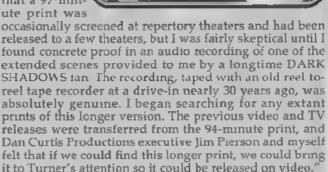
## by Drew Sullivan

omething strange has been found in a vault and this time it isn't Barnabas Collins! In fact, that famous television bloodsucker is nowhere around, since he played no part in NIGHT OF DARK SHADOWS (1971), the second and last feature film based on the phenomenally successful soap opera DARK SHADOWS, created by producer/director Dan Curtis. The "something strange"—astonishing, really—is 35 minutes of lost footage!

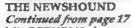
NIGHT OF DARK SHADOWS, a Gothic ghost story and sequel to 1970's HOUSE OF DARK SHADOWS (which did star Jonathan Frid as Barnabas), was severely recut at the 11th hour by order of MGM studio head James Aubrey The resulting 94-minute film, though a moderate commercial success, was panned by most critics who—unaware of the studio-imposed hatchet job—complained that the story was muddled and confusingly told.

Genre historian/film restorer Darren Gross discovered the film—now the property of Turner Entertainment—in late July after several months of effort in order

to gain access to the Turner vau.ts. "I had heard from a number of different sources that a 97 minute print was



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MY RETURNS the same month on DVD and VHS, and shakes loose the direct-to-video TREMORS 3: BACK TO PERFEC TION And watch for A&E's AVENGERS '68 featuring John Steed and Tara King, and Disney's two-disc collector's edition of the classic SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS.

Jim Carrey gets stuffed in lots of stockings once HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS (Universal) debuts on video in November. Available from Fox on DVD at the same time is a special THX edition of the 1988 Lucasfilm fantasy WILLOW, and the complete fourth season of THE X FILES. Paramount's special director's DVD edition of STAR TREK THE MOTION PICTURE is also scheduled for November release

British BUFFY fans have long enjoyed the first two seasons on DVD, as well as VHS box sets of ANGEL It's rumored that Fox will finally make BUFFY and ANGEL available Stateside on DVD by the end of the year. Also watch for episodes of TWIN PEAKS from Artisan

Available from those happy Anglophiles at Acorn Media are boxed sets of TOMMY & TUPPENCE: PARTNERS IN CRIME (VHS) and CADFAEL (DVD). Each set contains about five hours worth of mysterious diversion for \$49.95.

Elite Entertainment's Drive-In Discs (\$29.95 each) let you relive the vintage drive-in experience on DVD with a double-feature of fifties sci fi flicks, plus cartoons, vintage shorts, and a secondary audio track with such ozoner ambiance as cricket chirps, slamming car doors, and hooting hecklers. Volume One features AIP favorites THE SCREAM.NG SKULL and THE GIANT LEECHES, and Volume

Two presents THE WASP WOMAN and THE GIANT GILA MONSTER.

He's synonymous with John Steed of THE AVENGERS, but Patrick Macnee also has a connection to The Great Detective, having portrayed Dr. John Watson three times—and Sher.ock Holmes once—on the small screen. Macnee returns to the scene of the crimes as host of IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, a 45-minute video tour of Victorian London Macnee visits Holmes' haunts—and those of his friends, foes and illustrious clients—and presents vintage film clips of Sherlockian appearances. Visit www.chiptaylor.com for more information.

Speaking of matters Sherlockian, MPI Home Video has released Volume Two of the Granada series starring Jeremy Brett and David Burke. This edition contains two episodes (THE CROOKED MAN and THE SPECKLED BAND), and it can be had for \$14.95.

## Perilous Publications

The Cushing Confidential is a labor-of-love fanzine dedicated to The Gentle Man of Horror, Peter Cushing New York fan Christopher Gullo has assembled interviews, movie and DVD reviews, and contributions by Patrick Macnee and our own Forrest J Ackerman into his 50-page inaugural issue. For more information, contact Mr. Gullo at 34 Steven Place, Smithtown NY 11787, or at cgullo@juno.com.

Gone, but never to be forgotten: Count Dracula Society founder Dr. Donald A Reed, cartoonist Hank Ketcham; actor/calypsoman Sir Lancelot Pinard; guitarist Chet Atkins; singers Perry Como, John Hartford, John Lee Hooker, Emma Kelly, Kirsty MacColl, Susannah McCorkle, John Phillips, and Joey Ramone, Broadway cos-

tume designer Freddy Wittop, playwrights John Herbert and Jerry Sterner; TV hosts Morton Downey Jr. and Lou-Steele, authors Douglas Adams, R. Chetwynd-Hayes, and Robert Ludlum; playwright/actor Jason Miller, film composer Piero Umiliani; voice actor Norma Mac-Millan; stunt performer Russell Saunders, visua, effects artist Ross Hoffman; cinematographer John A. Alonzo; screenwriters Leo Marks, George F. Slavin, Larry Tucker, and Michael Valle, animation titan William Hanna, Disney animator Norman Hall Wright; producers Charles B Fitzsimons, Jack Haley Jr., Sy Wein traub, and Sam Wiesenthal; directors Robert Enrico, Ken Hughes, Giacomo Gentilomo, Michael Ritchie, and Ralph Thomas, writer/producer/director Alex Nicol, actors Lewis Arquette, Jean-Pierre Aumont, Sandy Baron, Corinne Calvet, Andrew Cassese, Imogene Coca, Peggy Converse, Anthony Dexter, Dale Evans, Lou Fant, Gai. Fisher, Arlene Francis, Brother Theodore Gottlieb, David Graf, Jack Lemmon, Jimmy Logan, Scott Marlowe, Claudia Martin, Whitman Mayo, Virginia O'Brien, Carroll O'Connor, Nancy Parsons, Nyree Dawn Porter, Anthony Quinn, Rockets Redglare, Norman Rodway, Sir Harry Secombe, Joan Sims, Ann Sothern, Anthony Steel, Beatrice Straight, Harry Townes, Joan Vons, Deborah Walley, Len Wayland, Toby Wing and Edward Winter, DINC DONG SCHOOL's Miss Frances R. Horwich, Christopher Hewitt, and Virgin Records executive—and Scarlet Street's fond Forum family member-Rick Squillante

Send The Hound your questions, comments and compliments via email to TheNewsHound@yahoo.com.



## Scarlet Street's DVD and Laser

## PIT AND THE PENDULUM **MGM Home Entertainment**

Englishman Francis Barnard (John Kerr) arrives at the castle of the reclusive Spanish nobleman Nicholas Medina (Vincent Price) to investigate the untimely death of his sister, Elizabeth (Barbara Steele), who ts Medina's wife. Barnard also makes the acquaintances of Medina's young sister, Catherine (Luana Anders), and the family physician, Dr. Charles Leon (Anthony Carbone). It soon becomes obvious that Elizabeth perished under mysterious circumstances Barnard's abrasive search leaves no stone unturned-not even the crypt in which his sister has been interred! Medina eventually succumbs to madness when Dr. Leon and the not-sodead Elizabeth maneuver to terrify him out of his wits. The trauma catapults the nobleman into a frenzied recreation of his own diseased roots.

PIT AND THE PENDULUM (1961) initially unspools as a virtual remake of director Roger Corman's previous Edgar Allan Poe adaptation, THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER (1960) Corman repeats many of USHER's hallmarks, including matte painting exteriors, sets draped with cobwebs, and tinted flashback/fantasy sequences. Screenwriter Richard Matheson ups the ante by subjecting Medina to two adulterous triangles that seem as inspired by Freud as by Poe.

Price's preceding enactment of Roderick Usher was that of a melancholy aesthete. As Medina, the actor chortlingly launches his own inquisition in what may represent the most controversial lead performance of the entire AIP Poe series. Some feel that he goes over the top, but I enjoy the exaggerated mannerisms that Price employs to suggest that Medina has "become" his murderous father. Corman goes too far by having Medina suddenly appear in his father's torture costume

during the climactic pendulum scene; Price has ably demonstrated, through body language and facial expression, that the nobleman has mentally regressed to his horrific past

Corman contributes an amusing audio commentary track, in which he rhapso dizes about integrating Freudian symbolism into the production. He entertainingly describes the making of the picture, although it's apparent that he hasn't watched it of late 'He mistakenly lists the composer as "Ronnie" Stein, when Les Baxter actually wrote PIT's percussive score. Corman speaks warmly about his cast and crew, but doesn't mention that Barbara Steele was dubbed by another actress. He remains modestly pleased with

that the listener will likely share The disc also includes a nearly five minute television prologue that was used for two commercial network airings circa 1968 Luana Anders, reprising Catherine Medina, wanders through a madhouse populated with inmates portrayed by Martine Bartlett and Sid Haig, as well as extras (including a dwarf in a jester's suit) that resemble survivors of Corman's THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH (1964) My contemporaries always disbelieved my recollection of this rare footage, but its inclusion here proves the story that I told them was true

MGM's DVD is successful for the most part. Corman's hand some cinematography is presented at 2:35-1. Fleshtones and color values are generally good, but visual grain becomes noticeable during rapid movements by cast or camera. Occas.onal artifacting is also present, but the

source material itself remains satisfactory, given its vintage. A widescreen trailer narrated by Paul Frees is also included John F. Black

#### X-MEN (SPECIAL EDITION) 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment \$22,98

In the world of Marvel Comics' popular X-Men series, "normal" humans regard mutants-people whose genes give them superpowers and sometimes freakish physiques-as outcasts to be feared, outlawed, even hunted down and killed The X-Men are mutants who have banded together under the leadership of a psychic and telekinetic, Professor Charles Xavier, who has trained them to harness and use their powers for good, even in detense of the humans who reject them The X-Men comics have spoken powerfully to teens, ethnic minorities, gays, women, anyone feeling alienated. But all is not gloom and doom in the mutant world; the Marvel comics are also whopping good stories, written and drawn with humor and flair, to be enjoyed by anyone in search of a compelling tale.

Which brings us to last summer's inevitable (given the comics' popularity and status) X-MEN movie. It became one of the season's bonafide hits, and not just because the comics have such a loyal following. X-MEN, the movie, is a whopping good tale, too Writer David Hayter and director Bryan Singer (1995's THE USUAL SUSPECTS) boiled the comic's dozens of characters down to a select core, introducing most of them through the eyes of Wolverine (Hugh Jackman) and Rogue (Anna Paquin), the newest re-cruits to Professor Xavier's School for Gifted Children. This movie is obviously meant, given its introductory setup and its open ending, to be the first in a new X-





Singer's mantra during the shoot was to "keep it real," and the result is a film whose supposedly outlandish characters seem absolutely believable and human in every way. Like the comics, X-MEN is about conflicting emotions, philosophies, and relationships, the consequences of prejudice, and trying to make sense of one's place in the world. The scenes between Wolverine and Roque are especially engaging, Jackman and Paquin have wonderful chemistry together. The film never descends into preachiness and displays a wicked sense of ironic humor. The pace is swift, and -of course—there are several major action sequences.



X-MEN does have flaws. With so many characters, some are not as fully developed as the others. The final battle atop the Statue of Liberty seems singularly studiobound (probably due to the \$75 million budget, low for an action and effects-laden f.lm) and is not the team effort it would have been in the comics. Some of the dialogue falls flat. Wispy, stiff Halle Berry is utterly inadequate as the regal Storm, and James Marsden as X-Men captain Cyc ops evinces little authority, especially next to Australian breakout star Hugh Jackman's electrifying Wolverine (arguably the comics' most popular character). On the other hand, Patrick Stewart seems born to p.ay Professor Xavier as does Ian McKellan to play Magneto, Xavier's old friend and nemesis. Singer caught the teenage Anna Paquin, so radiant as Rogue, on the cusp between girlhood and womanhood Famke Janssen is fine as Jean Grey, Cyclops' lover and fellow X-Man. Magneto's henchmen, Sabretooth and Toad, are played to the h.lt by, respectively, Tyler Mane and Ray Park (aka Darth Maul in 1999's THE PHANTOM MENACE) Rebecca Romign-Stamos is a sensual standout as Magneto's paramour and enforcer, the very naked, very blue shapeshifter Mystique. Bruce Davison contributes his usual solid work as antiMutant senator Robert Kelly

λ MEN on DVD is presented in a gorgeous anamorphic 2-35.1 transfer with a 5.1 Dolby Digital soundtrack. (Singer decided against a second DTS soundtrack in order to free up space on the disc and al low for the best visual quality possible.) Alas, there is no director commentary, instead we have excerpts from Singer's visit to THE CHARLIE ROSE SHOW, definitely worth watching, but why didn't we get the entire interview? Extra features include an extended branching version of the movie with deleted (and non-anamorphic) scenes, which also may be accessed separately; the Fox special THF MUTANT WATCH, Jackman's screen test, an art gallery; animatics; trailers and TV spots; and two Easter Eggs (Click on the rose and on the dogtags.) The DVD package consists of a silver cardboard case and cardboard slipcase with the X-MEN logo Very attractive, but probably easy to damage, too.

Paula Vitaris

#### THE VENGEANCE OF SHE Anchor Bay Entertainment \$14.98

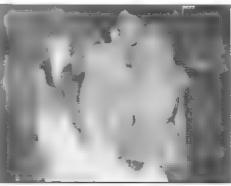
Hammer, never one to shy away from making money on a sequel, followed up production on the fairly classic SHF 1965) with the far less ambitious THE VENGEANCE OF SHE (1967) H. Rider Haggard had himself provided the impetus for such a move with his own literary endeavor, Ayesha. The Return of She (1905) Hammer's film had little to do with literature, however; rather, the famous film company chose to plot a new course for the legendary queen by reversing the original story, this time hav ing the immortal Killikrates (John R.chardson) searching for the reincarna tion of his lost love. Unfortunately Hammer spent as little money as possible in executing this ingenious idea and bringing it to the screen

O.inka Berova (the anglicized name of Olga Schoberova) stars as Carol, a beautiful young woman who suffers from amnesia. She hears voices in her head calling her to the mysterious East. When she turns and veers off in another direction, she suffers terrible headaches. Ed ward Judd is Philip Smith, a doctor who takes a liking to Carol (could libido have anything to do with it?) and decides to travel with her to unknown destinations. Their travels are upset with all manner of peril, natural and supernatural

The film is dull throughout, but it really ralters when the duo enter the lost city of Kuma, which consists of a couple of columns and a nice marble floor. Rich ardson is the dashing Killikrates of the previous film, though this time around he inexplicably speaks with a different voice. Add to this the fact that Berova is likewise dubbed and the film develops an air of cheapness remarkable even by Hammer's lowest standards. (Let's "credit" this to the involvement of American film company Seven Arts, which contributed to a period in Hammer history when bust lines were more important than budgets.)

Despite terrible direction from Cliff Owen, best known for fantasies of a tleshly nature be was responsible for NO SEX, PLEASE—WE'RE BRITISH (1973) and THE BAWDY ADVENTURES OF TOM JONES (1976)-and a script rather on the slow side, VENGEANCE does have its rewards. A particularly nasty but effective scene involving black magic is one of the most engaging and realistic ceremonies caught on screen, and parts of it were later used to add credibility to Hammer's terrific TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA (1969). Add some typically deft performances from such top-notch Br.tish thespians as Judd, Noel Willman, Andre Morell, Colin Blakely, and Derek Godfrey, and the movie is almost saved. Almost

Anchor Bay cannot be faulted for their DVD presentation of this lesser Hammer title The transfer is superb, far superior to the faded Castle Films PAL video release in England. The rich Technicolor has never looked better, particularly the blues, reds, and yellows. The widescreen format is appropriately done at a 1.66:1 aspect ratio, and the disc also contains the theatrical trailer and two television spots Perhaps unnecessary is the repeat presentation of the WORLD OF HAMMER episode which can also be found on the discs for THE VIKING QUEEN and PREHIS TORIC WOMEN (both 1967) Purists will



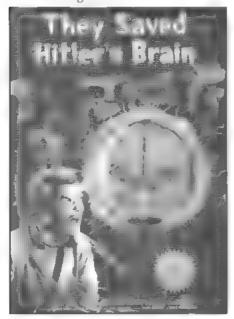
be happy to know that the soundtrack remains in mono and hasn't been reworked for Dolby Digital 5.1

-Chris Workman

## THEY SAVED HITLER'S BRAIN Rhino Home Video

Long a staple of Worst Film lists, THEY SAVED HITLER'S BRAIN is comprised of two parts quite obviously removed from each other in years and technical competency, each has somewhat uncertain origins. The earlier part, possibly an independent production, was directed by David Bradley, who helmed Charlton Heston's student films of PEER GYNT (1941) and JULIUS CAESAR (1950), and photographed by Stanley Cortez, whose work graced THE MAGNIFICENT AM-BFRSONS (1942), FLESH AND FANTASY (1943), and Universal's 1941 go at THE BLACK CAT. The newer portions are usually identified as the work of film students. The cast includes Carlos Rivas

(1957's THE BLACK SCORPION), billed below Walter Stocker and Audrey Caire but in larger type The supporting cast is filled with "Who-is-that?" faces from fifties and sixties film and TV roles; only Nestor Paiva is identifiable from appearances in genre favorites such as the first two Black Lagoon entries.



The earlier footage was apparently filmed circa 1963 under the less plot-revealing title of MADMAN OF MANDOR AS and may or may not have ever been released. The preposterous premise involves Nazis ensconced in a banana republic, preparing a new attempt at world domination under the orders of the still living head of the Fuhrer (insert preferred Head of State joke here). Actually, it's no loopier than some of the other livinghead films that had a vogue around this time.

Acting throughout the picture is uniformly good, a factor that has to be attributed to director Bradley. Paiva, playing a sort of Latino Boss Hogg, is his usual colorful self. Stocker and Caire (who bears an alarming resemblance to Donna Reed) are on a par with such other B leads as Rex Reason and Faith Domergue. Carlos R.vas is particularly notable in a dual role as brothers, all but unrecognizable in moustache and artfully gray-streaked hair as the older sibling.

Much of the criticism aimed at the film's ineptitude and incomprehensible plot is really prompted by the ghastly newer footage. The editing is fairly clever in melding the two, but cannot overcome the radical difference every time Cortez's ripely dramatic lighting butts up against a scene obviously lit by one of those home-movie flood-lamp rigs. And everything else—from the bad sound recording and clunky casting to the mane and convoluted scripting—is a complete disaster. Howlers in the Bradley section, by contrast, mostly center on Hitler's head, which is plopped in an oversized beaker atop some machinery; when it's

removed for a road trip, there are no tubes for blood circulation or any connections to the machinery (By contrast the Jan-in-a-pan setup of 1962's THE BRAIN THAT WOULDN'T DIE is a marvel of scientific accuracy) And in several key scenes, the actor's head is mexplicably replaced with an unconvincingly inert prop Whether actor or effigy, it just plain looks ludicrous!

Still and all, Bradley's portion is hardly the worst living-head movie—an honor reserved for the deliciously excruciating MAN WITHOUT A BODY (1957)—and could have stood alone as a slightly under-length but competently helmed thriller without the addition of any extra scenes. Ironically, while not exactly great, it would not be memorably bad enough to have gained the notoriety it has without that footage

Rhino's DVD has no extras beyond chapter stops and a delightful Monty Python-like animated menu with Hitler's head bouncing and jabbering atop his machine. The print, billed as remastered from the original elements, is often badly speckled and has one patch of wobbly sound. The full-frame print is from the complete 91 minute version

—Harry Long

#### THE EXORCIST Warner Home Video \$24.98

Everyone's favorite heartwarming, coming of age tale of a young girl facing her inner demons is back—bigger and louder than ever Since its initial release in 1973, there has been much speculation and debate about an alleged longer, first cut of writer/producer William Peter Blatty's and director William Friedkin's horror masterpiece-the bulk of said speculation and debate coming perhaps from the filmmakers themselves. For years, Blatty has lamented the loss of the original cut he approved, a cut Friedkin all but denied ever existed. Yet last year, by the powers of some dark, mysterious forceperhaps even those of the dread demon Pazuzu the world had unleashed upon it what is probably the closest to that elusive original cut anyone will ever see

Released in 2000 as THE EXORCIST THE VERSION YOU'VE NEVER SEEN (we can be thankful it wasn't billed as "E2K"), with 11 minutes of newly-restored footage and a booming, remixed soundtrack, the movie enjoyed a successful theatrical run, and an introduction to a whole new generation of horror fans.

As most everyone knows, the story—based on Blatty's bestselling 1971 nov el follows the misadventures of actress Chris MacNeil (Ellen Burstyn) and her 12-year-old daughter, Regan (Linda Blair), living in the Georgetown area of Washington, DC, while Chris stars in a new film Regan develops what at first seems to be an illness, but when medical teams are left baffled, the agnostic Chris is urged to turn to the Catholics for help ("You're telling me that I should take my daughter to a witch doctor?") and face the

possibility that her daughter is possessed by a genuine devil. With the aid of exorcist Father Lancaster Merrin (Max von Sydow) and Jesuit Priest/Psychologist Damien Karras (Jason Miller), Chris hopes to cast out the demon and bring ner daughter back.

While the film retains most of the emotional and psychological impact it always had, the restored footage itself is a mixed bag The setup and transition into the true nature of Regan's illness is more gradual, and the exorcism and story's resolution .ess ambiguous-but was all of it really necessary? Two brief, opening shots have been inserted before the onginal opening Iraqi sequence, introducing the two houses (the Jesuits' and the Mac-Neil's) that will come under attack by the demon Pazuzu. A new, extended sequence in which Chris takes Regan to a clinic for a physical examination shows the very early stages of Regan's illness, but presents too much too soon. Much of the shock of Regan's later, more violent and aggressive behavior is diminished by this scene. Instead of merely supporting the possibility that Regan's problem is purely psychological, the scene dilutes the eerie subtlety of her symptoms leading up to the direct takeover by the invading entity

Extra "subliminal" shots are added when Chris arrives home to find Regan left unattended, one of which (the pastywhite "Captain Howdy" face briefly appearing on a kitchen appliance!) is nearly laughable. The infamous "spider walk" scene has been well cut into the film, though the take used is contradictory to the other symptoms of Regan's malady, and not as chillingly effective as the one included as a supplement to 1998 s 25th anniversary laserdisc. Several scenes have been added to the exorcism at the Mac-Neil house, as well as an extended epi logue, but every one of these additions is pure gold, marvelously supporting the themes of Blatty's testament to the mysteries of fa.th.

Featuring beautifully remastered sound and picture, the DVD's supplements include two theatrical trailers, TV and radio spots, and a running commentary by Friedkin. The last is the only real letdown on the disc, as all but approximately 10



minutes of Friedkin's commentary consists of nothing but play-by-play narration of the film's events, offering almost no additional insight into the significance of the new footage. One can't help but notice Blatty's conspicuous absence here, and wonder how much more worthwhile the commentary might have been with him as a foil for Friedkin's observations. However, this setback aside, this splendid disc is a worthwhile addition to the libraries of new fans and diehard EXOR-CIST fans alike.

-Tony Strauss

#### TORN CURTAIN Universal Home Video \$29.98

Several of Alfred Hitchcock's post-PSY-CHO (1960) productions, notably THE BIRDS (1963), MARNIE (1964), and even TOPAZ (1969), have seen their critical reputations rise in subsequent decades. The same cannot be said for the director's 50th effort, TORN CURTAIN (1966) It was, and remains, a Cold War clunker to many viewers. It shouldn't be dismissed as a complete failure, however, because it contains a least a couple of superb Hitchcockian set pieces.

Professor Michael Armstrong (Paul Newman) is an American nuclear scientist who publicly defects to the Communist



side for the continuation of his antimissile research. His fiancee/assistant, Sarah Sherman (Julie Andrews), hesitatingly follows him, unaware that the physicist is operating as a double agent. After obtain ing the missing variable to a mathematical formula, the couple follows a perilous escape route to emerge from behind the Iron Curtain.

The leading characters aren't compellingly scripted, and method actor Newman can't ignite any onscreen chemistry with the goody-goody British thrush Hitchcock was reportedly unhappy with her studio-influenced casting, although he had struck gold with Doris Day's starring performance in THF MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH (1956). This time there's no showstopping "Que Sera, Sera"

to justify a singer's presence in the cast. Andrews' gauze-lensed close-ups only contribute a sense of artifi-

cality to her appearance

TORN CURTAIN is primarily recalled for its suspense sequences. The repulsive, step by step murder of Armstrong's German "security guide," Gromek (Wolfgang Kieling, whose portrayal is simultaneously abrasive and oddly sympathetic), practically defines the film for most viewers. Others recollect the concluding 40 minutes, in which the couple's escape by bicycle, bus, and ship offers several nail-biting episodes. Unfortunately, the cumulative effect of these scenes is diluted by a couple of cameo performances. Countess Kuchinska (Lila Kedrova) is an unhappy woman who symbolizes the plight of natives disenfranchised by the Communist regime, but her numerous claustrophobic closeups only halt the tension. A prima Czech ballerina (Tamara Toumanova), who delights in ferreting out defectors, spots Armstrong and

his fiancee while performing a ballet. Although her birdlike eyes create an arresting image, it's doubtful that she could actually discern them in the audience.

Universal's DVD presentation is superior to previous TV and video editions boasting much stronger color and a 1:85-1 aspect ratio. The transfer is virtually blemish-free and contains no apparent artifacts The supplemental 33-minute documentary TORN CURTAIN RISING is slightly defensive about its subject. Narrator Trev Broudy describes the film's three-part structure and serves up such t.dbits as Hitchcock's discomfort with the possible implications of the German Gromek's asphyxiation in the farmhouse oven No principals (and not even Pat Hitchcock!) appear in any on camera in terviews. There's a wonderful 14 minute montage of scenes accompanied by original composer Bernard Herrmann's rejected score, allowing the viewer to directly compare the merits of Herrmann's somber reading of the material with John Addison's jazzier interpretations. For some, this feature will be the nighlight of Universal's entire Hitchcock series The DVD also includes photographs, poster reproductions, a faded trailer, and brief production notes.

—Iohn F. Black

## AMERICAN PSYCHO Universal Home Video

\$ 26.98

AMERICAN PSYCHO (2000) stirred up considerable interest, both positive and negative, during its long, torturous road to the screen. The bestselling 1991 novel by Bret Easton Ellis was slammed for glamorizing violence, for its misogyny, and simply for being dull Interest peaked when Leonardo DiCaprio expressed brief interest in a film version. DiCaprio's interest waned, however, and the original director (Mary Harron) and star (Chris



tian Bale) returned to the project, having used the down time wisely to strengthen their concept of the project Now that all the controversy has died down, we can examine the film on its own terms.

AMERICAN PSYCHO is a very dark comedy indeed Patrick Bateman (a sly reference to Norman Bates) is played superbly by Bale. Bateman is a successful stock broker in the Reagan era eighties, one of those "captains of capitalism" who think that they can do anything and get away with it. Bateman takes the concept one step further he thinks he truly holds the power of life and death over people, and has the right to kill with impunity Hookers, winos, and other innocents fall victim to his charm and savagery. Only his self centered girlfriend (Reese Witherspoon) avoids falling prey to his lethal charms. Ironically, it is only when he kills one of his own, a fellow broker, that Bate man is marked for a murderer by a detective (a nice turn by Willem Dafoe) To tell more would be-well, criminal, but it's worth noting that many of the film's events may exist only in Bateman's sick, twisted mind

The DVD transfer is beautiful, and the film is available in its uncut version, featuring a scene with Bateman having sex with two prostitutes-possibly another subjective view of reality on the killer's part Extras include an interview with Bale in which he speaks in his own Brit accent, a "making of" featurette, a trailer, and cast and filmmaker bios

Kevin G Shinnick

## CLEOPATRA

20th Century Fox Home Entertainment \$26,98

When it was released on June 12, 1963, the 20th Century Fox, Todd-AO CLEO-PATRA was so surrounded by controversy that critics didn't seem able (or fit) to judge the film on its merits Reviews discussed how much it cost (\$44 mil.ion), who was sleeping with whom (anyone care to guess?), and scarcely considered the film For nearly 40 years, CLEOPAT-RA has symbolized all that is supposedly wrong with Hollywood: huge budget overruns, high-priced stars, ineffectual management, unfinished scripts, and basic disagreement over concept—in this case, between cowriter/director Joseph L. Mankiewicz and Darryl F. Zanuck, studio head at the time of the film's release.

Is this film worth seeing?

It's long and fragmented. The first half, based without credit on Shaw's CAFSAR AND CLEOPATRA, is better than the second, which covers the story of Shakespeare's ANTONY AND CLEOPAIRA, but then the Shaw has always played better than the Shakespeare. Strangely, there is more on-screen chemistry between Elizabeth Taylor (Cleo) and Rex Harrison (Julius Caesar) than between Taylor and Richard Burton (Marc Antony). There are great performances from Hume Cronyn, Martin Landau, and especially Roddy McDowall as Octavian And there are even flashes of the Mankiewicz wit. For instance, Cleopatra, after a 10-minute en trance into Rome-past thousands of



cheering extras (who according to the "making-of" documentary were shouting "Elizabeth! Elizabeth!"), preceded by dancers, archers, trumpeters on horseback, and what must have been every starlet and muscleman in Italy—descends from her slave powered Sphinx, approaches Caesar's throne, bows—and then winks, instantly making all the hoopla human. It ain't ALL ABOUT EVE (1950), but it will do Add breathtaking sets and costumes, and an Alex North score unexpectedly different from the usual "sword and sandal" music and the result is something well worth the time, even if only once.

The bonus features are what make this three-disc package worth purchasing. The two-hour documentary (unfortunately minus chapter stops, subtitles, or closed captioning) presents all the behind-the-

scene details: false starts, illnesses, in trigues, and betravals. With the exception of a reference to CLEOPATRA producer Walter Wanger's INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS (1956) as "a B movie," the documentary is well-researched and entertaining. The feature-length au dio commentary by Landau, publicist Jack Brodsky (coauthor of 1963's The Cleopatra Papers), and Mankiewicz's sons Chris and Tom, gives insight into the chaos of this production, and is frequently funny. There are also trailers. newsreel footage of premiers, and stills of costume sketches, concept art, the souvenir program, and the British press book. The THX-approved transfers of picture (2.35 1 Anamorphic) and sound (5.1 and Dolby Surround) are flawless

According to the documentary and commentaries, Mankiewicz, from the start of his involvement, intended CLFO-PATRA to be two three-hour films, the second to be released six months after the first. In hopes of stemming the floods of red ink by cashing in quickly on the romance (read scandal) between Taylor and Burton, the two films were reedited into one four-hour film by Zanuck, which explains much of the film's lack of coherence. The most intriguing information to emerge is that the original footage sup posedly exists, and someone is working to recreate the films Mankiewicz originally intended Now, all we can do is

—Duane But.er

#### KRONOS Image Entertainment \$24 99

tewicz's "lost" masterpieces

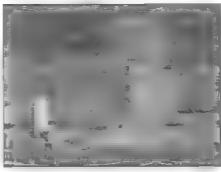
When I was a kid, I thought KRONOS (1957) was an awesome film! And you know what? It holds up pretty well!

wait to see if they were indeed Mank-

KRONOS stars Jeff Morrow, Barbara Lawrence, John Emery, Morris Ankrum, George O'Hanlon, and Robert Shayne It was produced and directed by Kurt Neumann In movie theaters, it was presented in widescreen, a feature preserved on the DVD The plot is pretty simple scientists at a secret atomic research lab are taken over and controlled by a being or device from an orbiting UFO Earth military hits it with a few missiles and it crashes into the Gulf of Mexico. The next day, a giant metallic monolith emerges and tramples over everything in its path looking for electrical energy to drain and beam into space. The military figures if they drop an atomic bomb on the thing, that should do it, but the scientists realize that such an action just might make Kronos even stronger Too late! Kronos absorbs a direct hit and emerges unscathed Finally, our heroes figure a way to turn Kronos' pow er against itself and . . . well, you know

The film transfer is pretty clean, with only a few speckled segments, mostly around the reel changes. There are a few unintentionally funny moments, mainly due to shots being added or effects put in after the fact. In one scene, the scientists

are in the lab looking at a view screen, not knowing whether they see a meteor or a space ship. Why the mystery? The closeup of the screen (added later) clearly shows a flashing spacecraft!



The only supplemental extra is a theatrical trailer (They could have at least had some kind of commentary or a section showing the film's posters and promotional material)

---Ted A. Bohus

#### ROBOT MONSTER Image Entertainment \$24.95

Say the name Ed Wood, or the title PLAN NINE FROM OUTER SPACE at a party, and even the ignorant will give some sort but Phil Tucker and of knowing wince ROBOT MONSTER? No one seems to know enough to run the other way. But be free from fear no more, Image has brought ROBOT MONSTER to us "in Intriguing 2-D!" (as the deadpan cover art proudly proclaims) If it was presented in the original 3-D, or gave us the options of both, this disc would really be something-but then again, a deluxe presentation of ROBOT MONSTER seems a contradiction in terms

Would-be spaceboy Johnny (Gregory Moffett) opens the film by trying to blast his little sister (Pamela Paulson) to atoms with his toy raygun. He then wanders around Bronson Canyon until he stumbles on a German professor (John Mylong) and his strapping young assistant, Roy (George Nader), at work in a cave. Later, he and mom (Selena Royle) and older sister Alice (Claudia Barrett) fall asleep on their picnic blanket. While Johnny sleeps, the world ends! When he wakes up, he finds the German married to his mom, his sister feuding and wooing with Roy, and a guy in a gorilla suit and a diving helmet out to destroy them all! Armed with a deadly bubble machine and an echochamber voice, the fiendish Ro-Man threatens the post-nuclear family with a telecommunication device that shows everything from nuclear blasts to footage from ONE MILLION B.C. (1940). All seems lost, until the alien falls in love with "Al-lice" and learns a valuable les son about being "hu-man."

Like some LSD vers.on of THE SOUND OF MUSIC (1965), the sight of this overweight gorilla in his diving helmet,

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# Believe in Believe

## Robert Tinnell

interviewed by Mark Clark

It's never easy being 14 years old, but it's especially tough for Ben Stiles. First, he can't seem to communicate with his absentee parents, diplomats who apparently live overseas. Then he gets kicked out of boarding school after pulling an imaginative but childish ghost prank on his classmates. He's forced to move in with an icy-tempered grandfather he barely knows. And finally he discovers that his grandfather's estate is haunted by the eerie specter of a young woman in a red coat. Of course, after the ghost prank, no one takes his claims seriously.

Ben (Ricky Mabe) is the point-of-view character of BE-LIEVE (2000), a horror film aimed at younger audiences and lensed by director Robert Tinnell, whose previous work includes horror-fan favorite FRANKENSTEIN AND ME (1996). Unlike FRANKENSTEIN AND ME, though, which was essentially a coming-of-age story with horror trappings, BELIEVE is designed to generate real chills—4 and it delivers. Even veteran horror fans should receive at least a few satisfying shivers from the picture.

As BELIEVE's story progresses, Ben quickly realizes that his grandfather (Jan Rubes) isn't telling everything he knows about the mysterious Figure in Red. Granddad goes ape when he discovers that Ben has enlisted the help of a neighbor girl (Elisha Cuthbert), who has also seen the ghost, in his quest for the truth. The girl's uncle (Ben Gazzara) is equally upset by this development, and forbids her to see Ben. The teenagers realize that their families' histories will somehow unlock the secrets of the Stiles house, and maybe help their phantom find peace.

Tinnell refers to BELIEVE as "an entry level horror film." Pressed for an explanation of this term, he explains. "There's a void for young people—and older people, too—who would like a quality supernatural experience that isn't misogynist or extremely gory. I was trying to make something like I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE, that kids and adults can look at and be scared without being steamfolled."

Imagine George Romero shooting a movie for THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DISNEY and you'll have some idea of the film's tone To achieve this effect, Tinnell asked production designer Jules Ricard to decorate his sets in the style of the classic Hammer Horrors. Then Tinnell shot his movie much in the mode of direc-

ABOVE: Robert Tinnell on the set of BELIEVE. INSET: George Lucas and Stephen King discuss an upcoming scene for CREEPSHOW (1982), while newcomer to film Tinnell (behind King) listens in. LEFT: It's alive! Jamieson Boulanger and Ryan Gosling create a monster in the delightful FRANKENSTEIN AND ME (1996).

tor Mario Bava the man behind such classics as BLACK SUNDAY (1961). Viewers who know Tinnell only through FRANKENSTEIN AND ME will find BELIEVE a revelation. It's far more visually cohesive than his early work and its use of color is striking Certainly Tinnell was well served by cinematographer Pierre Jodoin, whose work is imaginative and eloquent. Composer Jerry DeVilliers Jr. sets the mood with a truly haunting score.

Tinnell, a formudable horror-film scholar in addition to being a gifted young filmmaker, built in several nods toward great ghost pictures of the past. Scarlet Streeters will appreciate the film's visual references to such movies as THE UNINVITED (1944) and THE INNOCENTS (1961). BELIEVE also quotes from Hammer's THE HORROR OF DRACULA (1958) and—of all things—the Bela Lugosi Monogram meller THE INVISIBLE GHOST (1941). The director confesses to influences as wide-ranging as Romero's MARTIN (1977) and THE GHOST AND MR. CHICKEN (1965), but his capsule description of BELIEVE is "The Hardy Boys meet Wuthering Heights"

Like FRANKFNSTEIN AND ME and his directorial fea-

Like FRANKFNSTEIN AND ME and his directorial feature debut, KIDS OF THE ROUND TABLE (1995), BE-LIEVE also boasts memorable performances by young, unknown actors. Cuthbert's portrayal of an orphan who hopes the ghost will help her contact her dead parents, is particularly moving. Why do Tinnell's films routinely leature good performances by young actors, when such performances are so difficult to find elsewhere?

"The casting process is critical," Tinnell said. "You can t settle. You have to have trust in the kids you pick and you have to work them very hard. You have to push them, to tell them 'that's not working!"

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SCREEN AND SCREEN AGAIN Continued from page 24

traipsing lightly along the rolling hills of Bronson Canyon, is a hauntingly lyrical sight few who have witnessed it sober are ever likely to forget. Here, captured on a decent transfer from an only mildly crummy print the grandeur is much



more palpable than it ever was on video, and the whole affair transcends its humble auspices to attain the surreal sweep of a Leni Riefenstahl mountaineering epic. Yes, regardless of the lame acting, the repetitive script, and the Godardesquely abrupt snippets of Elmer "What Was He Thinking?" Bernstein's score—or maybe because of these things there is something truly magical about this unendurable masterwork On DVD, there's just that much more to love, that much more lack of detail in which to lose oneself Thanks to the clarity of the digital transfer, for example, I was able to discern that the rocketship in one of the big special effects scenes was not on a wire, as one might presume, but actually held by a hand covered with a sky-colored cloth. Sometimes it's things like that which make being "hu-man" worthwhile. Erich Kuersten

### FUNNY FACE Paramount Home Video \$29 99

When thinking of the best of Audrey Hepburn's many memorable performances, three that immediately come to mind are SABRINA (1954), FUNNY FACE (1957), and MY FAIR LADY (1964). In each of these films, Hepburn portrays a not-too-ugly ducking who, with the help of the heart and/or the attentions of an older male mentor, is transformed into a stunningly beautiful swan. With SABRINA, it's the force of love that changes a plain chauffeur's daughter into an object of affection for two brothers (Humphrey Bogart and William Holden), MY FAIR LADY has her Cockney guttersnipe painstakingly prepared for entry into the

Edwardian upper classes, where she is accepted for her patrician bearing, charm, and beauty. Based on the Greek legend of Pygmal.on, a sculptor who brought his statue to lite and fell in love with it, MY FAIR LADY substitutes a professor of languages (Rex Harrison) for the sculptor, and creates an "almost" love story. FUNNY FACE, however, is a love story. Set against the glamour and fashion industry of the fifties, the film finds Audrey as a Plain Jane who, under the watchful eye of a fashion photographer (Fred Astaire), blossoms as the camera clicks away

Hepburn headlines with the decadesolder Astaire in a frothy musical film that the folks over at Metro Goldwyn Maver would have been proud to have produced FUNNY FACE, though from Paramount, bears all the markings of an MGM product, which isn't so surprising when one reads the credits. Director Stanley Donen was responsible in part for such MGM classics as ON THE TOWN (1949), ROYAL WEDDING (1951), and SINGIN' IN THE RAIN (1952). Costar Kay Thompson was known behind the scenes at Metro for her delectable vocal arrangements. substantially for Judy Garland. Roger Edens, FUNNY FACE's producer, was an invaluable asset to the MCM music department, and is probably best known for the special arrangement of "You Made Me Love You" for Garland, who sang it to a photograph of Clark Gable as "Dear Mr Gable" in BROADWAY MELODY OF 1938 (1938) Astaire himself, following his RKO contract, appeared on screen for MGM, with a variety of partners (including Ginger Rogers), in the musical classics ZIEGFFLD FOLLIES (1946), EASTER PA-RADE (1948), and THE BAND WAGON (1953), as well as the cult musical YO-LANDA AND THE THIFF (1945) And if you look quickly enough, there's even Ruta Lee, fresh from SEVEN BRIDES FOR SEVEN BROTHERS (1954), another Metro



class.c. With a cast and crew honed in the MGM musical traditions, and a score of notable George and Ira Gershwin songs, FUNNY FACE easily lives up to the phase often used to describe its glo ries as "The MCM musical that Metro never made."

Although problematic, Paramount has for the most part delivered a vibrant Technicolor DVD transfer Colors leap

from the screen with the keen sense of a fashion photographer's eye. There are more shades of pink in the opening number ("Think Pink") than in a box of 64 Crayola crayons; each delivered faith fully Skies are a glossy blue, and the reds are incredibly stable for a film of this age. The problem arises within the print itself there are small blue dots appearing at the same point on the screen, which is either a sign of a flaw in the original negative or a signal to get a FUNNY FACE restoration under way. The sound has been given two wonderful restorations. The Dolby Digital 5.1 mix enables the musical numbers to fill the listening space, adding some directional dialogue and making more than adequate use of the low bass sounds. Purists will opt for the restored original mono track, which is decidedly front and center

As it stands, Paramount's DVD of FUN-NY FACE is a remarkable achievement and a worthy addition to any film lover's home library

-Anthony Date

#### THE LEGEND OF THE 7 GOLDEN VAMPIRES Anchor Bay Entertainment \$29.99

Most of the series produced by Britain's great House of Hammer ended with an embarrassing whimper rather than a climactic bang. For over two decades, American audiences thought that the Dracula franchise ended with the most shameful entry imaginable. Happily, Anchor Bay's DVD release shows that this simply was not the case.

Desperately trying to inject some new life into the series, Hammer decided to jump on the martial arts bandwagon and teamed up with Sir Run Run Shaw to produce THE LEGEND OF THE 7 GOLDEN VAMPIRES (1973) The film foregoes the modern-era time frame of the previous two films and sets the adventure in the Chinese village of Ping Kuei in 1904 Dracula (John Forbes-Robinson, picking up Christopher Lee's discarded cape) has taken over the body of a warlord (Chan Sen) and now rules over the titular golden vampires. Fortunately, Professor Van Helsing (Peter Cushing) is lecturing in nearby Chungking, where the grandchil dren of a villager who actually killed one of the vampires comes to seek his aid in destroying the horde. Yes, the film is definitely not one of Hammer's brightest moments, but it's very far from their worst

Anchor Bay has done a fine job in bringing the Roan Group's laserdisc edition to DVD. THE LEGEND OF THE 7 COLDEN VAMPIRES is presented on one side of the DVD in a gorgeous 2:35 print, with its original mono soundtrack never sounding better. The image is incredibly crisp (so crisp, it shows the poor matte job of Dracula's castle in the distance) and perfectly balanced. While lacking a commentary track or a true trailer for the Hammer version, this side also includes a gem of a supplement: the long out-of-

print soundtrack. The 45 minute, 40 second soundtrack features John Forbes-Robinson and Peter Cushing narrating the entire story with James Bernard's



great score and sound effects enhancing the tale. It's almost like a lost Hammer radio show!

The second side of the DVD features a truly interesting supplement: the hideous Max Rosenberg edit that was released in the USA as THE SEVEN BROTHERS MEET DRACULA (1979) Fourteen m.n. utes shorter than the original, SEVFA BROTHERS is actually missing much more footage, due to the fact that so many shots are used and reused over and over again, mostly in slow motion! This was the film Americans saw as Hammer's final Dracula entry and rightly bashed. To add insult to injury, the image is cropped so closely that Dracula's castle is cut in half for the first long shot and most characters have the tops of their heads out of frame The film is the best it's ever looked, but is still much grainter and has more print damage than the splendid LEGEND. A trailer for SEVEN BROTHERS is also featured on this side of the disc. Hysterically Ltled THE SEVEN BROTHERS AND THEIR ONE SISTER MEET DRACULA the trailer gives away every major plot point of the film!

Anchor Bay has delivered a great disc, one that's a must for all Hammer fans

Jeff Al.en

#### FROGS MGM Home Entertainment \$19 98

In the early seventies, Smokey the Bear cautioned, "Only you can prevent forest fires," and Woodsy Owl reminded us to "Give a hoot, don't pollute." The wood land creatures in FROGS (1972) deliver a similar message—but do so in much harsher terms

This movie puls few punches and bits much harder than such other eco-thrillers of the era as SILENT RUNNING (1971) and SOYLENT GREEN (1973), not to mention GODZILLA V5 THF SMOG MONSTER, with which FROGS shared an AIP double-bill FROGS plays like a body count giallo horror, with hacked off wildlife taking the place of the mysterious assassim. People die—lots of 'em and they die in bizarre gruesome, yet strangely satisfying ways.

Pickett Smith (Sam Elliott), a photo-

Pickett Smith (Sam Elliotti, a photojournalist for an ecological magazine, is shooting pictures of chemical spills in what appears to be the Louisiana bayou country Drunken, stupid Clint Crockett (Adam Roarke) overturns Smith's canoe with his speedboat. But C.int's sister, Karen (Joan Van Ark.), takes a shine to Smith and invites him back to the family's island estate for a Fourth of July celebration, which doubles as a birthday party for the family's hatchet faced patriarch, Jason Crockett (Ray Milland)

Heartless Jason has deployed copious quantities of pesticides to try to kill the island's native fauna, which includes spi ders, snakes, lizards, and, of course, frogs The offended beasties, we soon learn, aren't about to take this lying down or hopping or crawling or slithering or anv other way. The animals rise up and strike back at the human interlopers Crockett family and friends, gathered for the party meet with various brutal demises orches trated by the outraged critters. The two most memorable of these betall Joan's effete Cousin Michael (Nicholas Cortland), who is poisoned by tiny lizards who trap him in a greenhouse and break a series of containers filled with pesticides and other toxins, and dippy, butterfly-collecting



Aunt Iris (Holly Irving), who makes like an hors d'ouerve platter for a legion of hungry snakes

Persnickety viewers may wonder what such animals as tarantulas, rattlesnakes, and gila monsters are doing in the bayou, so far removed from their natural desert habitat, but that's beside the point There's nothing remotely plausible about this film, so why sweat the small stuff' Surprisingly, the movie doesn't play its loopy premise with tongue-in-cheek; it goes for straight chills. Even more surprisingly, this approach works! Most of the murders are genuinely disquieting, and the setting—a virtual photocopy of Alfred Hitchcock's THE BIRDS (1963) remains eerie and tense.

Milland provides a delightfully arch portrayal as the movie's crotchety, bitter old geezer and chief irritant. Perhaps the actor was feeling a bit curmudgeonly himself. By this point, Milland had gone from starring in top drawer dramas (in cluding his Oscar-winning turn in 1945's THE LOST WEEKEND) to appearing in low budget B movies like, well, FROGS Nevertheless, Milland so diered on until 1984, appearing in 37 more TV and film productions.

The picture is populated with cookiecutter characters, but Elliott, seen here before he grew the grant mustache that later became his trademark, makes an endearing hero. Van Ark has little to do but looks good doing it. Director George McCowan keeps the pace brisk and tells the tale in a straightforward, workmanlike tyle McCowan worked primarily in tellision. His numerous TV credits include episodes of BARNABY JONES, STREETS OF SAN FRANCISCO, and HART TO HART, FROGS plays like a TV movie.

MGM/UA has released FROGS in a crystal clear, anamorphic widescreen transfer of a vivid color print. The sound quality is very good, as well. The disc also includes the original theatrical trailer. It's a near-flawless presentation of a surprisingly enjoyable movie.

—Mark Cark

## HALLOWEEN Anchor Bay Entertainment

Citizens of Haddonfield beware' He's back' Halloween, 1963. All the neighborhood children are trick or treating, but Michael Myer's older sister is tricking with her boyfriend on her father's livingroom sofa. Michael becomes upset and takes matters into his own murderous hands. Fitteen years later, he escapes form the state hospital and makes his way back to his old hometown to find fresh victims. Pursued by Dr. Sam Loomis (Donald Pleasance) and Sheriff Brackett (Charles Cyphers), Michael goes on a murder spree the likes of which this small town has never seen!

HALLOWEEN is truly a terrifying film, the most famous of director John Carpenter. The camera angles and dark, moody shots do more to frighten than do actual scenes of blood and gore (very minimal in this movie). Carpenter's music score adds even more to the movie's fright quota.

Anchor Bay's DVD release of HAL LOWEEN is available in two formats on one disc, a widescreen version at 2 35 1



and a full frame presentation. The THX digital restoration is absolutely marvelous, with breathtaking color. Additional features include original theatrical trailers, television and radic spots, a still and poster gallery behind the scenes photos, ialent b.os, and the documentary HALLOWEEN UNMASKED 2000, produced and directed by Mark Cerulli.

HALLOWEEN launched Jamie Lee Curtis' movie career and spawned six sequels (to date), none of which approaches the terror of the first. Curtis is quite good, though we keep asking ourse.ves why Jamie Lee always drops the knife. With a raving lunatic right in front of her, she keeps stabbing him and then letting go of the knife! They'd have had to pry it from my fingers!

-Dan Clayton

THE PRISONER VOLLME 1—8 A&E Home Video \$39.95 Each Set

Fans of THE X-FILES will find that parancid series' spiritual stepfather in THE 'RISONER, Patrick McGoohan's 1967



fantasy series about a secret agent who, on resigning his job, is kidnapped and taken to a seaside resort town called The Village The happy Villagers, dressed in colorful garb, are known only by num bers (The ex-spy is Number Six.) Over the course of a 17-episode run, the hero, played by McGoohan, faces relentless attempts to find out why he resigned his ob: Was he selling out? Was it a matter of principle? The efforts include various mind games and technological trickery, all usually spearheaded by the Village .eader, Number Two (played by a differ ent actor in most episodes, showing that puppet leaders may change but the totalitarian song remains the same).

McGoohan, who devised the series format with George Markstein, was clearly worried about the encroachment of technology on society. The Village, on the surface a collection of quaint 19th-century Italianate buildings, is a kind of Disney and of terror. Beneath the old-world charm, Number Six discovers a wealth of technological marvels, including spy cameras and mind-altering lasers, making THE PRISONER a Kafkaesque parable about the dehumanization of man.

The series is also big on other timeless themes, from identity and trust to elections and education. In "The Schizoid Man," for instance, Number Two recruits

a double of Number Six to make him doubt his sanity. "Free for All" is a marvelous satire of the entire election process. "A Change of Mind" satirizes self-help groups and the idea of community outreach showing that both can be used as the tools of oppressors. In that episode, Number Six is declared "unmutual," a menace to society ("Public Enemy Number Six," as he puts it) because of his individualistic ways. In the end, he turns the tables on his captors by using both the suspicion inherent in the Village and the cattlelike attitude of its happy, easily-led inhabitants.

The series was controversial, as well Fpisode 14, "Living In Harmony," was actually banned by CBS during the series original run, paradoxically because it was too violent and pacifist. The story finds the Prisoner in the American West, playing a cowboy who refuses to wear a gun

In "The General," Number Six opposes a brainwashing system called "Speed learn," which endows its users with the knowledge required for a university level degree in only 10 minutes. You might know the facts and figures, argues Number Six, but can you think original thoughts? Can you reason? Or are you us, or e of many, a row of "educated cabbages" (Education reform advocates, are you listening?)

Such ideas are first showcased in "Ar rival," the episode which introduces the hero as an unbending moralist who "will not be pushed, filed, stamped, indexed, briefed, debriefed, or numbered" whose "life is my own" Through odd camera angles and quick cuts, director Don Chaffey (1963's JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS), puts the viewer in the hero's disoriented shoes, where no one—even onetime friends—can be trusted. As the Prisoner, McGoohan is quirky and intelligent, moving like a caged animal

The DVD release of the series—previously issued in less-than-pristine video and laserdisc versions by MPI a decade ago—is cause for celebration. Cynical and thought provoking in a way unusual for much of sixties TV, THE PRISONER, at its best, is top-notch television. The transfer quality on the first eight volumes (featuring the initial 14 episodes) is terrific, even better than the limited edition Columbia House videos of two years ago

That said, the extras included are generally poor. All the DVDs feature the same interactive map of the Village, each also include coming attractions trailers, and some odd foreign filmclips. Volume One offers the 16mm "alternative version" of "The Chimes of Big Ben," an escape attempt installment costarring Leo McKern, which was discovered about a decade ago in Canada. Of subpar quality, it has different editing and music, and an extra scene

What could have been included? For starters, there is a superb British multipart documentary about the show by Stephen Ricks, featuring interviews with cast, crew, and other principals. There is also a Canad an television interview with

McGoohan, in which the actor talks extensively about the creation of the series

What DVD viewers have to settle for, however, is a 25-minute interview with production manager Bernard Williams, included on Volume Five Williams is presented in a decidedly no frills man ner facing an anonymous questioner, he discusses everything from actors and writers to budgets and locations. But the conversation is not for the uninitiated, since it presupposes you know something about THE PRISONER's history. For instance, there are numerous references to SECRET AGENT (McGoohan's previous series) and Lew Grade (the head of ITC, the program's production company), which are sure to leave many confused There are also flat-out omissions and falsehoods: Williams makes no mention of script editor George Markstein, who created the series with McGoohan, and it was Markstein who cowrote the first script, "Arrival," not McGoohan as Willtams asserts

While there is fascinating stuff in Williams' tark—the development of the white balloons that menace the Villagers, for instance, shows how luck plays a role in creation—it is shallow stuff compared to what could have been offered. That's too bad—because THE PRISONER, thought provoking and entertaining at the same time, deserves better

-Tom Soter

#### THE DEVIL'S RAIN VCI Home Entertainment \$24.99

THE DFVIL'S RAIN (1975) is a cheap movie. Not one of those endearing, overachieving small-budget productions Just cheap. Everything about this movie is cheap, not only its nickel and dime sets and penny-pinching costumes (William Shatner wears a straw cowboy hat that looks more like a wicker trash can), but absolutely everything. For instance, the first half of the film features lengthy footage of first William Shatner and then Tom Skerritt driving back and forth to an old ghost town where most of the story takes place. These long, pointless scenes clearly







exist for no purpose other than to pad the film's running time

Producers James V. Cullen and Michael S. Glick appear to have constructed this film from the marketing plan down. One interesting decision was bringing in Church of Satan founder Anton Szandor LaVev to serve as a credited "consultant" (LaVey also plays a minor role.) This ploy was designed to help THE DEVIL'S RAIN stand out amid the torrent of demonic fright flicks that flooded theaters in the wake of THE EXORCIST

The movie holds interest because of its oddball cast, cubbled together to maximize marquee value while minimizing budget. The roster blends proven stars whose careers were at a low ebb (Shatner and Fraest Borgnine) with neophytes some of whom later distinguished themselves (such as Skerritt and John Travo ta who has a bit part) and some of whom did not (such as Joan Prather) Veterans Ida Lupino, Eddie Albert, and Keenan Wynn all receive high billing, but make only brief appearances. None of these performers acquit themselves particularly well, though. Still, it's fun to watch Shatner and Borgnine gnaw the scenery and try to out-mug one another.

Borgnine plays immortal Satanist Jonathan Corbis, who wants to recover a book stolen from him generations ago by an unfaithful follower Corbis' erstwhile disciple sold out the cult to Pilgrim justice in 17th-century New England. The movie does not explain how Corbis gains eternal

life, or why he waits several hundred years to seek revenge. Nevertheless, revenge he seeks by hunting down the descendents of the turncoat. First, descendent Mark Preston (Shatner) squares off against Corbis and his congregation (In a macabre touch, the eyes of Corbis' minions turn into black gogglelike bulbs once they fall under his power.) After Mark loses a battle of wills with Corbis, Tom Preston (Skerritt) takes over To win, Tom will have to decipher a lot of black magic mumbo jumbo and keep his head to gether better than quick-tempered Mark.

All this is, at best, perfunctory. The film simply marks time until we reach the Big Shock Finale, wherein Corbis and his band of merry devil worshipers melt into puddles of steaming, Satanic goo. This is not scary in and of itself, though it remains rather unappetizing. Still, after 10 minutes of liquefying Lucifer-worshipers, the effect loses even its power to disgust and turns comic. The Wicked Witch of the West's disintegration at the cl.max of THF WIZARD OF OZ (1939) was more chillingly realized

Director Robert Fuest began his career as a TV production designer, writer, and finally, director during the sixties. His tenure as director of THE AVENGERS catapulted Fuest from television to the big screen. After directing the thr Iler AND SOON THE DARKNESS (1970), Fuest made a sp ashy horror debut in 1971 with THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBES, one of the sharpest and quirklest chillers of the

decade He cowrote and directed his next two films, DR. PHIBES RISES AGAIN (1972) and THE FINAL PROGRAMME (1973), but their commercial failure sent rus career into a skid THE DEVIL'S RAIN (1975) was his final picture before he returned to television. His compositions, especially those involving the ghost town exteriors, provide the only artistically interesting elements in the film.

VCI's transfer has its problems. In three or four places, images brief y break down into digital "bit maps," the hallmark of poor transfers. While distracting, these defects surface infrequently and the discremains watchable. The sound quality is excellent. The film is presented in letter-boxed, widescreen format. The discremaling and the original theatrical trailer.

Mark Clark

#### BEACH BLANKET BINGO MGM Home Entertainment \$14.95

BEACH BLANKET BINGO (1965) is celebrated by aficionados as the most enter taining entry in the AIP Beach Party series. The regular stars are buttressed by a battery of returning costars and celebrity additions. Frankie (Frankie Avalon) and Dee Dee (Annette Funicello) are still managing to make each other jealous, and this time they've encountered their perfect foils: a somewhat jaded skydiving couple

Continued on page 78

# EMPIRE OF THE IMAGINATION



## WHO WISH BE DIBLATO PART TWO by Lelia Loban

ACULA'S DAUGHTER) and Lansing C. Holder

t B, Schoedsack on THE MOST DANGEROUS





Helen Gahagan Douglas (wife of actor Melvyn Douglas) may have ruled a fantastic lost city as Hash-A-Mo-Tep in the elaborate 1935 production of SHE, but she was no match for the dirty politics of Richard Nixon during a 1950 Senate race. Douglas herself was guilty of some tricky doings when she tried to buy up every existing print of the film, which, in the antifeminist spirit of the times, she thought might prove a political liability. Costar Randolph Scott, who played Leo Vincey, was the subject of scandal and speculation himself due to his cozy living arrangements and close personal relationship with fellow star Cary Grant.

elegant than the potsherd of Haggard's tale!) and tell Leo the family legend and mission. In this version, the ancestral victim comes from 15th-century England instead of ancient Egypt. John Vincey emphasizes the quest for the flame of life rather than revenge against She, not named Ayesha here, but the harsher and more Pharaonic-sounding Hash-A-Mo-Tep. After John's death, Leo and Holly go looking for the Lost City of Kor.

In the nearly half a century between publication of Haggard's novel in England (1886) and RKO's release of SHF in the United States (July 12, 1935), the world's knowledge of Africa had expanded as public opinion of Victorian colonialism grew more negative. As a consequence, Ruth Rose's screenplay relocates Kor to Muscovy, borrowed from Haggard's sequel, Ayesha: The Return of She (1905) Holly explains to Leo that Muscovy is an old name for Siberia, Russia and Kamchatka. Volcanic mountains give Hash-A-Mo-Tep's hidden valley its tropical climate, though it's surrounded by ice and snow. A sound stage stands in for snowbound Muscovy, with excellent matte paintings by Mario Larrinaga.

Rose adds two original characters, Dugmore (Lumsden Hare) and Tanya (Helen Mack), living in a squalld yurt in Muscovy. Tanya replaces the character of Ustane in Haggard's plot. Surly Dugmore uses Tanya as his servant. He says she's his daughter, but she grew up in a convent, igno-

rant of her parentage, until he showed up and claimed her. (Cooper had wanted to cast Joel McCrea and his wife, Frances Dee, for Leo and Tanya. When they proved unavailable, he settled for Randolph Scott and diminutive former child actress Helen Mack.)

Greedily eyeing Leo's valuable gold statuette, Dugmore imagines that the quest will lead to piles of treasure He offers a protection racket he will guide the travellers in return for a partnership, but if Holly and Leo refuse, he'.l turn the locals against them. The travellers reluctantly accept Dugmore's bargain. He brings Tanya along to cook and clean up. She adapts well to hardships—which include wearing a dress on a dogsled! Naturally, she falls for Leo, who treats her decently

In the mountains, the party discovers the frozen remains of the 15th-century Vincey ancestor, whose wife survived to pass along the legend to future generations, after he and a saber-toothed tiger killed each other. The recent presence of this Pleistocene tiger reveals Kor as a "lost world" in more ways than one. (Trust KING KONG veterans Cooper and Schoedsack to liven up the landscape with at least one impressive—if dead—prehistoric creature!) When Dugmore tries to hack gold trinkets from the corpse, the noise of his ice axe brings down an avalanche, one of Vernon L. Walker's many good special effects and extremely well-staged. The avalanche sends Dugmore down a



rates Leo Holly, and Tanya from the porters, but uncovers the entrance to the labyrinth of caves

into the hidden valley

The extras playing the cave-dwelling Amahagger tribe include white people in darkface, black people in paleface, and people whose race isn't obvious. That casting reflects Haggard's vague description of a lost race descended from the ancestors of the ancient Egyptians. Noble Johnson, uncredited, plays the Chief of the Amahagger. In his long life. Johnson played more than 120 roles, mostly small and many uncredited, from 1909 through 1966 Johnson, a friend and Colorado Springs classmate of thousand-faced Lon Chaney, could pass for a member of any race. (Today, he's regarded as one of America's earliest successful African American actors and producers, though he and his brother George, denied that they were part black. The brothers founded the Lincoln Motion Picture Company in 1916, which made all-black "race movies" until it folded two years later ) In addition to more than two dozen roles as Native Americans, Johnson played Spaniards and other white Europeans, Russians, Chinese, South Sea Islanders, Mexicans, Indians from India, Africans, African Americans, an Australian aborigine ancient Egyptians, and modern Arabs. He was Friday in ROBINSON CRUSOE (1922), Uncle Iom in TOPSY AND EVA (1927), and Queequeg in MOBY DICK (1930) He's remembered best for his genre appearances in THE ML MMY, MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE, and THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME (all 1932), as the chief of Skull Island in KING KONG and 50N OF KONG (both 1933) and as the zombie in THF GHOST BREAKERS (1940)

With no lines in English, Johnson's Chief and all the other Amahagger speak standard caveman gibberish while using old-fashioned, melodramatic mime gestures left over from silent films. To an ommous drumbeat, the Amahagger heat a huge fron helmet over a blazing fire and beckon Holly forward

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LEFT: Randolph Scott and Helen Mack were the romantic leads of SHE (1935). Scott went on to lasting fame as a Western star. Mack, remembered today for her roles in SON OF KONG (1933) and HIS GIRL FRIDAY (1940, 48 the hooker with a heart of gold), had a phenomenally successful career behind the scenes in radio, directing such shows as A DATF WITH JUDY, PAGF 33: She (Helen Gahagan) contemplates eternal life without love.

Bruce copes by temporarily slipping out of his intelligent Holly characterization and into the fuddy-duddy persona that he later adopted to play Dr Watson to Basil Rath bone's Sherlock Homes, but there's nothing he can do to make Holly credible in this scene Happily, grim, stoical Billan (Gustav von Seyffertitz) arrives with his spear-chucking troops, barely in time to call off the cannibal feast

Hatchet-faced Austrian native von Seyffertitz specialized in villains, torturers, murderers, moster criminals (including Professor James Monarty in the 1922 SHFRLOCK HOLMES), beastly Huns, and mad scientists. Here, he s more sympathetic but Billali still loyally obeys Hash-A-Mo-Tep's orders, even when these involve lies and atrocities. As her name indicates, Hash-A-Mo-Tep (Helen Gahas, p) is more the eternal despot than the eternal lover in this veron of the story

Film historian William K. Everson called SHE one of the definitive Art Deco films of the 1930s ... " Once the scene shifts to Kor, the reason is obvious. The film reportedly lost \$180,000 (a shocking amount, in the middle of the Depression), and no wonder! RKO saved some money by recycling sets from KING KONG, including Skull Island's massive gates. Looking small against their monumental scale, a slave swings part of the way down the wall on a rope, to pound on a gigantic drum that signals other slaves to open the gates. For the city state within, art director Van Nest Polglase, an architect (he designed RKO's tower logo), supplemented KING KONG salvage with spectacular new Art Deco sets, inspired by an entity of theme, and a reece with a bit of Babylon and Mycenae thrown in for good measure. Set decorator Thomas Little and costume designers Aline Bernstein and Harold Miles contributed their own Deco imaginations, while cinematographer J. Roy Hunt took full advantage of the spectacle.

The cathedral-sized Hall of Kings occupies a set 34,000 feet square, complete with a vaulted celling 40 feet tall Well, maybe "cathedral" isn't quite the right word for this place, since the furnishings include a volcanic pit for human sacrifice and disposal of the disobedient! More pagan splendor rows of monstrous stone gods and bathtub-sized braziers, some set so high on the walls that lackeys with torches light the lamps and incense by swinging through the air on long ropes, like gibbons swinging through the trees. Another slave bangs on a gong about 10 feet tall, shaped like a brass O-ring The eternally youthful Hash-A-Mo-Tep makes her grand entrance atop a staircase of Busby Berkeley proportions, where She appears, veiled in fog, to greet the wounded Leo and his comparions

In her only feature film performance, Helen Gahagan received mixed reviews as She. Those who prefer the shrikter Avesha of silent-screen actresses such as Marguerite Snow and Betty Blythe call Gahagan beautiful but cold, icy, remote, and not sensual enough, despite her diaphanous costumes (one of which inspired a costume for the Queen in the 1937 animated Disney classic SNOW WHITE). Not all reviewers agree Variety reviewer "Land" pans the story as too absurdly improbable, but praises the spectacle and its star "Helen Gahagan cops honors. It was wise casting to pick a face not well known to the audience. That helped the illusion." (Variety, July 31, 1935.)

A Barnard College graduate, Gahagan came to the movies from a brief but successful Broadway career, which she left to train as an opera singer Gahagan's education, digniinvite him to some nice little welcoming ceremony. Nigel fied bearing, and lovely speaking voice serve her well, because the larger-than-life character enunciates in such a high level of diction: "I am vesterday and today and tomor row I am sorrow and longing and hope unfulfilled. I am Hash-A-Mo-Tep, She, She Who Must Be Obeyed I am I." Speaking with presence and conviction, Gahagan plays She as a regal, totalitarian dictator and a sexual predator, consumed less with love than with the desire to win Unlike Haggard's Avesha and most of the silent stars in this role. Gahagan's She doesn't inspire instant, uncontrollable adoration in men. Sensible Holly never falls for her at all. Even the more vulnerable Leo gets over her fast, once She starts revealing her evil nature

She promises Leo, Holly, and Tanya to spare the Ama hagger taken prisoner for participating in the hot-pot assault, but as soon as the softhearted strangers leave the hall, She tells Billah to kill all the prisoners. The viewer might suspect that Billali, too wise to reveal his feelings, secretly

loves She. He willingly carries out this order

She can't fool Tanya, who never loses an opportunity to preach conventional Little Woman virtues of hearth and home. When Tanya courageously stands up for her mundane morals, Hash-A- Mo-Tep punishes this open defiance by secretly switching Tanya for a scheduled human sacrifice in the Hall of Kings. This song-and-dance spectacle of a ceremony cost RKO a fortune for the fabrics and the custom-made prop musical instruments alone. The scene earned Benjamin Zemach a 1936 Oscar nomination for the now-defunct category of Dance Direction

Leo starts to suspect the identity of "that girl" bound, gagged, and struggling feebly under layers of veils, as She explains, "She carries to the gods my gratitude for the gift

of enduring life."

"Carries? How?" Leo asks in some alarm, though a moment later, as guards carry Tanya to the volcanic well, he

asks, naively, "Is she a dancer, too?"

"No, she will not dance." The look that flits across Hash- A-Mo-Tep's face suggests she's wondering just how dumb Leo can get-or maybe it's Helen Gahagan wondering that of Randolph Scott. The barely-concealed scorn is enough to make the viewer wonder whether She's obsession with Leo would survive prolonged intimacy. Not unti-Billali presents a large, ceremonial knife to Hash-A-Mo-Tep does Lee demand to know, "Is this a human sacrifice?"

In the ensuing melee, Lea pulls out his concealed pistol, starts shooting, and knocks over a brazier, setting the Hall of Kings on fire as he and Holly rescue Tanya Escaping through the caverna, the explorers leap across an abyss, onto the teetering rock described by Haggard in the novel They scramble to safety, only to reach a dead end, at Hash-A-Mo-Tep's grotto of the sacred flame She, arriving through the shortcut from her own quarters, confronts Leo and threatens to kill Tanya tf he refuses the offer of eternal youth

When Leo reluctantly gives in, Hash-A-Mo-Tep taunts Tanya, "Your hair will whiten Your eyes will lose their brightness. Your cheeks will wrinkle Your limbs will wither. while I defy the years and laugh at time' Raising her arms, She cries, "I call upon the

flame most powerful, most swift, preserver of life and youth and beauty" The flame springs up like a tornado of lights and fireworks. When it dies down. She starts to speak the words again-"Your eyes will lose their brightness"-but it's She who starts to wither ...

A box office disappointment, SHE almost wound up as yet another lost movie. Helen Gahagan never acted in a frature film again and soon abandoned her acting career alto-gether, for politics. Fearful of what opposition candidates might do with the "She Who Must Be Obeyed" image in an era when national politics didn't readily welcome women, Gahagan tried to buy up all the rights and prints of SHE. She nearly succeeded in destroying every copy Running as a Liberal, Gahagan won California's race for Congress in 1944 and served for two terms in the U.S. House of Representatives. When she ran for the U.S. Senate against Richard Nixon in 1950, the Republican falsely accused her of being a communist and defeated her, earning his "Tricky

According to Marla Harper in The Washington Post (August 27, 1989), "Silent film star Buster Keaton was indirectly responsible for salvaging SHE and numerous other Holly-wood classics once thought to be lost." Soon after Raymond Rohauer created the Hollywood Film Society, "Keaton approached him and said, 'I have a garage full of film—maybe you'd be interested, young fella' Rohauer found nitrates, prints, and negatives of everything Keaton had been in,

plus the original print of SHE

In 1948, the radio series, ESCAPE (1947-1954), broad cast an adaptation of SHE, as episode No. 58. Information conflicts about the date. Older sources say that SHE aired on June 27, 1948. Frank Passage, who did extensive research for his log of the series on the Old Time Radio web site, (http://www.old-time.com), claims that the show did not broadcast on June 27, and that SHE first arred on July

In May, 1953, Comedy Pictures of India released a black-and-white feature film of SHE, titled MALIKA SALOMI, in Hindi and English versions. Columbia holds the audio rights. MALIKA SALOMI is a loose adaptation of SHE-as a musical comedy' Mohammed Hussain wrote and

directed the screenplay for this romp, photographed by V Kar-





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Hatchet-faced Austrian native von Seyffertitz specialized in villains: torturers, murderers, master criminals (including Professor James Monarty in the 1922 SHERLOCK HOLMES), beastly Huns, and mad scientists. Here, he's more sympathetic, but Billali still loyally obeys Hash-A-Mo-Tep's orders, even when these involve lies and atrocities. As her name indicates, Hash-A-Mo-Tep (Helen Gahagan) is more the eternal despot than the eternal lover in this ver-

sion of the story.

Film historian William K. Everson called SHE one of "the definitive Art-Deco films of the 1930s . . . . " Once the scene shifts to Kor, the reason is obvious. The film reportedly lost \$180,000 (a shocking amount, in the middle of the Depression), and no wonder! RKO saved some money by recycling sets from KING KONG, including Skull Island's massive gates. Looking small against their monumental scale, a slave swings part of the way down the wall on a rope, to pound on a gigantic drum that signals other slaves to open the gates. For the city-state within, art director Van Nest Polglase, an architect (he designed RKO's tower logo), supplemented KING KONG salvage with spectacular new Art Deco sets, inspired by ancient Egypt, Rome, and Greece, with a bit of Babylon and Mycenae thrown in for good measure. Set decorator Thomas Little and costume designers Aline Bernstein and Harold Miles contributed their own Deco imaginations, while cinematographer J. Roy Hunt took full advantage of the spectacle.

The cathedral-sized Hall of Kings occupies a set 34,000 feet square, complete with a vaulted ceiling 40 feet tall. Well, maybe "cathedral" isn't quite the right word for this place, since the furnishings include a volcanic pit for human sacrifice and disposal of the disobedient! More pagan splendor: rows of monstrous stone gods and bathtub-sized braziers, some set so high on the walls that lackeys with torches light the lamps and incense by swinging through the air on long ropes, like gibbons swinging through the trees. Another slave bangs on a gong about 10 feet tall, shaped like a brass O-ring. The eternally youthful Hash-A-Mo Tep makes her grand entrance atop a staircase of Busby Berkeley proportions, where She appears, veiled in fog, to

greet the wounded Leo and his companions.

In her only feature film performance, Helen Gahagan received mixed reviews as She. Those who prefer the slinkier Ayesha of silent screen actresses such as Marguerite Snow and Betty Blythe call Gahagan beautiful but cold, icy, remote, and not sensual enough, despite her diaphanous costumes (one of which inspired a costume for the Queen in the 1937 animated Disney classic SNOW WHITE). Not all reviewers agree. Variety reviewer "Land" pans the story as too absurdly improbable, but praises the spectacle and its star. "Helen Gahagan cops honors It was wise casting to pick a face not well known to the audience. That helped the illusion." (Variety, July 31, 1935)

A Barnard College graduate, Gahagan came to the movies from a brief but successful Broadway career, which she left to train as an opera singer. Gahagan's education, dignified bearing, and lovely speaking voice serve her well, be-

cause the larger-than-life character enunciates in such a high level of diction: "I am yesterday and today and tomorrow. I am sorrow and longing and hope unfulfilled. I am Hash-A-Mo-Tep, She, She Who Must Be Obeyed. I am I." Speaking with presence and conviction, Gahagan plays She as a regal, totalitarian dictator and a sexual predator, consumed less with love than with the desire to win. Unlike Haggard's Ayesha and most of the silent stars in this role, Gahagan's She doesn't inspire instant, uncontrollable adoration in men. Sensible Holly never falls for her at all Even the more vulnerable Leo gets over her fast, once She starts revealing her evil nature.

She promises Leo, Holly, and Tanya to spare the Amahagger taken prisoner for participating in the hot-pot assault, but as soon as the softhearted strangers leave the hall She tells Billali to kill all the prisoners. The viewer might suspect that Billali, too wise to reveal his feelings, secretly

loves She. He willingly carries out this order.

She can't fool Tanya, who never loses an opportunity to preach conventional Little Woman virtues of hearth and home. When Tanya courageously stands up for her mundane morals, Hash-A- Mo-Tep punishes this open defiance by secretly switching Tanya for a scheduled human sacrifice in the Hall of Kings. This song-and-dance spectacle of a ceremony cost RKO a fortune for the fabrics and the cus tom-made prop musical instruments alone. The scene earned Benjamin Zemach a 1936 Oscar nomination for the now-defunct category of Dance Direction.

Leo starts to suspect the identity of 'that girl" bound, gagged, and struggling feebly under layers of veils, as She explains, "She carries to the gods my gratitude for the gift

of enduring life."

Carries? How?" Leo asks in some alarm, though a moment later, as guards carry Tanya to the volcanic well, he asks, naively, "Is she a dancer, too?"

'No, she will not dance." The look that flits across Hash- A-Mo-Tep's face suggests she's wondering just how dumb Leo can get—or maybe it's Helen Gahagan wondering that of Randolph Scott. The barely-concealed scorn is enough to make the viewer wonder whether She's obsession with Leo would survive prolonged intimacy. Not until Billali presents a large, ceremonial knife to Hash-A-Mo-Tep

flame most powerful, most swift, preserver of life and youth and beauty." The flame springs up like a tornado of lights and fireworks. When it dies down, She starts to speak the words again—"Your eyes will lose their brightness"—but it's She who starts to wither . . . .

A box office disappointment, SHE almost wound up as yet another lost movie. Helen Gahagan never acted in a feature film again and soon abandoned her acting career altogether, for politics. Fearful of what opposition candidates might do with the "She Who Must Be Obeyed" image in an era when national politics didn't readily welcome women, Gahagan tried to buy up all the rights and prints of SHE. She nearly succeeded in destroying every copy. Running as a Liberal, Gahagan won California's race for Congress in 1944 and served for two terms in the U.S. House of Representatives. When she ran for the U.S. Senate against Richard Nixon in 1950, the Republican falsely accused her of being a communist and defeated her, earning his "Tricky Dick" reputation.

According to Marla Harper in The Washington Post (August 27, 1989), "Silent film star Buster Keaton was indirectly responsible for salvaging SHE and numerous other Hollywood classics once thought to be lost." Soon after Raymond Rohauer created the Hollywood Film Society, "Keaton approached him and said, 'I have a garage full of film -maybe you'd be interested, young fella. Rohauer found nitrates, prints, and negatives of everything Keaton had been in,

plus the original print of SHE.

In 1948, the radio series, ESCAPE (1947-1954), broadcast an adaptation of SHE, as episode No. 58. Information conflicts about the date. Older sources say that SHE aired on June 27, 1948. Frank Passage, who did extensive research for his log of the series on the Old Time Radio web site, (http://www.old-time.com), claims that the show did not broadcast on June 27, and that SHE first aired on July 11, 1948

In May, 1953, Comedy Pictures of India released a black-and-white feature film of SHE, titled MALIKA SALOMI, in Hindi and English versions. Columbia holds the audio rights. MALIKA ŠALOMI is a loose adaptation of SHE—as a musical comedy! Mohammed Hussain wrote and

directed the screenplay for this romp,

photographed by V Kardoes Leo demand to know, "Is this a human sacrifice?" In the ensuing melee, Leo mat. (Hussain dipulls out his concealed pistol, starts shooting, and knocks over a brazier, setting the Hall of Kings on fire as he and Holly rescue Tanya. Escaping through the caverns, the explorers leap across an abyss, onto the teetering rock described by Haggard in the novel. They scramble to safety, only to reach a dead end, at Hash-A-Mo-Tep's grotto of the sacred flame. She, arriving through the shortcut from her own quarters, confronts Leo and threatens to kill Tanya if he refuses the offer of eternal youth. When Leo reluctantly gives in, Hash-A-Mo-Tep taunts Tanya, "Your hair will whiten. Your eyes will lose their brightness. Your cheeks will wrinkle. Your limbs will wither, while I defy the years and laugh at time!" Raising her arms, She cries, "I call upon the





LEF I: The stunning sets for the lost city of Kor betray an Art Deco inspiration for the spectacular, all-dancing sacrifice scene in the 1935 RKO production of SHE. That's Tanya (Helen Mack) center stage in the veil, awaiting death RIGHT: Hash-A-Mo-Tep dishes out a few orders to one of her priests (Bill Wolfe) while Leo Vincey and Horace Holly (Nigel Bruce) observe. Bruce held in check his patented bumb.ing routine—perfected four years later when he first played Dr Watson in THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES and ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES (both 1939)—to give a fairly straightforward interpretation of Holly.

rected at least 60 Hindi movies between 1931 and 2000) Comedy Pictures changes the location to a lively bazaar, the better to use Haggard's plot as a framework for the movie's real reason to exist the song and dance numbers Roopa Varman stars as Ayesha, with Kamraan Sheikh as Leo Vincey and Krishna Kumari (most sources give her name as Rumari) as Ustane The supporting cast (featuring the Amahagger tribe singing and dancing in swirly satin capes!) includes Arvind Kumar, Amrit Rana, Helen Richardson, Ranjana Shukla, Kamal Mohan, Nazir Kashmiri, Rani, Raphik, Shafi, and Nanda Composers Muhammad Iqbal (who scored more than 60 Hindi movies between 1931 and 1999) and Krishna Dayal wrote the music, with words by Farooq Qaiser (author of lyrics for 54 Hindi musicals between 1950 and 1988). Solo singers on the soundtrack include Muhammad Iqbal, Meena Kapoor, Sulochana Kadam, and Madhubala Javeri

Film critics in India remember MALIKA SALOMI today not so much for the minimalist plot and character development, but because the cast includes a renowned dancer and cabaret singer, Heien Richardson. (She's probably featured here in one of the many variety acts, not as a speaking character.) Usually credited only as Helen, she made MALIKA SALOMI shortly before her phenomenal rise to stardom in the sixties. Though nearly unknown in the United States, Helen is one of the best-loved performers in "Bollywood," the thriving and extremely prolific Bombay film industry. Her ethnic background is Burmese and Spanish. She emigrated to Bombay from Burma in the early fifties. A recent winner of the Filmfare Lifetime Achievement award, Helen has made at least 338 movies from 1936 to the present, despite a career hiatus for a number of years, due to her marriage to screenwriter Salim Khan. She plays character parts today, but she appears in MALIKA SALOMI near her youthful peak as a singer and dancer.

On April 18, 1965, Hammer-Seven Arts and Associated British-Pathé released a new SHE, starring Ursula Andress as Ayesha, Peter Cushing as Major Horace Holly, John Richardson as Leo Vincey, Bernard Cribbens as Job, Rosenda Monteros as Ustane, Christopher Lee as Billali (High

LEFT: In the 1965 Hammer Films production of SHE, Ayesha (former Bond girl and *Playboy* centerfold Ursula Andress) challenges Leo Vincey (John Richardson) to save the life of a slave girl by stabbing her, but the spineless hero cannot bring himself to do so. (Leo is The Last Actionless Hero, it seems.) High Priest Ballali (Hammer veteran Christopher Lee) is not in the least bit surprised. RIGHT. Ayesha's Empire of the Imagination there called Kuma rather than Kor) was less elaborate than in the RKO production, but still pretty impressive and perfectly functional when it came time to roast a few disloyal subjects.





Priest of Avesha in this version), and André Morell as Ustane's father, Haumeid Hammer loops the dialogue for this international cast, with a distracting lack of synchron zation between words and lips in some scenes. Robert Day directs

the screenp av by David T. Chantler

This movie like the 1935 RKO version before it, benefits from excellent cinematography (Harry Waxman) and ar direction (Robert Jones), with a first rate musical score by Hammer veteran James Bernard. It was one of the late. composer's personal tavorites, since it afforded him the opportanity to expand beyond the norror genre into some-

thing more adventuresome. niversal originally planned to make SHE. Studio head Teny Hinds asked John Temple-Smith to write and produce, "but Temple-Smith's script (which was dark, violent, and true to the Rider Haggard novel, had left Universal cold." Hammer then got the nod. With executive producer. M chael Carreras and his associate producer, Aida Young, in charge, "adventure would be to the fore" (Den.s M.ekle and Coristopher I. Koetting, A History of the Horrors. The Rise and Fall of tac House of Hummer, Scarecrow, 1996.)

Hammer made a deal with MGM to act as distributor, and a budget of £312,000 made this the company's most expensive movie. Production began in August 1964, with six weeks of filming on location in Israel, then continued in the

Elstree studio until October.

The movie begins with a shot of the eternal flame in alls grotto, surrounded by flowers, as serene music plays. Suddenly, the scene jumps to black Africans in tribal masks, who dance wildly to thunderous percussion. These contrasting scenes abruptly cut back and forth several more times, and the unintentional humor gets SHE off to an unfortunate start, but a serious (though revisionist) adaptation follows, with the date of Haggard's story advanced to 1918

World War One has just ended. Three Englishmen, Major Holly, handsome young soldier Leo, and Holly's batman (orderly), Job, party in a Palestinian nightclub on their way home from the Mesopotamian front. John Rich ardson, a blonde hunk with a golden tan, is the first actor who resembles Leo as described by Haggard. According to director Robert Day, "John Richardson was a great-looking guy—and a nice one—but wasn't much of an actor. Anyway, most of his scenes were with Peter [Cushing], and he didn't stand a chance!" (Hammer Films: An Exhaustive Film ography, Tom Johnson and Deborah Del Vetchio, McFarland, 1996) Richardson consolidated his love object status by playing opposite Barbra Streisand in ON A CLEAR DAY YOU CAN SEE FOREVER (1970), for which director Vincente Minnelli had the actor photographed as though he were a love goddess from Hollywood's Golden Age.

Despite Day's misgivings, Richardson's sexy good looks and adequate acting skills are just right for this male bimbo role. Leo's main motivation is horniness. It's important that the actor not play him as an intelligent, heroic figure, because Leo's vapid passivity, his lack of true character with moral fiber, proves crucial to the plot. While Peter Cushing's Holly happily doesn't look like an ape (as Haggard describes Holly), he's the brains of the expedition and the

most interesting character, as in the novel.

This movie is more than just light entertainment, though of course it's that, too-loaded up with all the titillating dialogue, lurid situations, provocative costumes, and exotic sets typical of Hammer adventures. But David T. Chantler's script also reflects that in 1964, when SHE was being filmed, many people believed that the world was on the brink of a nuclear holocaust that could wipe the human race off the face of the earth. Chantler relates that fear to the nightmare of the Great War that had ended in 1918.

These three clean, well-dressed men, with money to spend on partying, have just been released from hell on earth During WWI while fighting in Europe, the British also engaged in heavy combat with the pro-German Ottoman Empire in Mesopotamia, where 15,814 Allied troops died, 12,804 of them from infections and diseases. The Brit ish fought the Turks, in Gaza, Jerusalem, baghdad, Aqaba, Bathsheeba, Haifa, Nazareth, Beirut, Tripoli, and Damascus With the Balfour Declaration, the British supported the establ shment of Israel as an independent Jewish state, soon to become the locus of yet more tighting. Turkey finally surrendered and signed the Armistice on the battleship Agamemnon, on October 30, 1918. On November 11, 1918, the Great War in Europe also officially ended, with more than 10 million of the estimated 63 million combatants dead. The Spanish Influenza epidemic carried off another 2) million During WWI, cultural upheavals about race and gender took place on the Allied home fronts. The British gave voting rights to women over 30. Forty-one suffragettes seeking the vote for American women were arrested outside the White House. The French executed femme fatale, dancer, and spy Mata Hari St. Louis experienced severe race riots with dozens of deaths; quartering of black (then called "Negro") soldiers near white communities in the South led to more race riots; and the National Guard approved its first

SHE opens with a display of these nationalist, cultural, and racial conflicts in the lively nightclub, where Arabs and drunken soldiers leer at the belly-dancers. (James Bernard later said he took particular pride in his belly dancing music for this scene.) Delectable Ustane, in a see-through black harem outfit slit down to her waist, lures Leo outside with come-hither looks and suggestive conversation. As Leo leaves with Ustane, other customers start insulting each other's nationalities and ethnic groups. The whole place erupts into a furniture-breaking brawl. There's humor in the scene, but it's an edgy humor Soon afterwards, instead of going home as they'd planned, Holly, Job, and Leo go on a hazardous march through a desert that leads straight to a hell disguised as a paradise, ruled by a despot and now on

the verge of civil war.

Ustane reluctantly plays Leo for a fool, which is hardly difficult. In the street, kissing him, attracted to him, and feeling guilty she changes her mind and warns him to Ieave. She's too lite. A thug bashes Leo over the head and drags him into Ayesha's lair, decorated in Middle Eastern opulence, where black robed Billali compares the unconscious Leo with his striking likeness on a golden medallion.

Billali congratulates Ustane.

Christopher Lee, the formidable Billali, told interviewers Robert W. Pohle, Jr. and Douglas C. Hart that he thought SHE "was a good piece of spectacular film." (The Films of Christopher Lee, Scarecrow Press, 1983.) Lee said in his autobiography that he made this movie while burdened with personal problems. Aside from the usual stresses of an actor's life, a few months earlier, his wife, Gitte, had undergone surgery to give birth to their daughter, Christina, born with deformed legs and feet. Before filming began on SHE, while living as an expatriate in Switzerland to avoid British taxes, Lee "was going through a form of nervous breakdown, without the luxury of men in white coats to beat me up and give me injections . . . I brooded savagely . . . . (Christopher Lee, Tall, Dark and Gruesome: An Autobiography, London: Granada, 1978.)

Lee tried to use work as a cure. "SHE was a perfectly happy film, Ursula Andress was charming, but I carried my burden onto the set with me. I was afflicted by a hangover from my recent experiences, and the sense of personal shambles that goes with them." Maybe this unease contributes to the especially remote, grim bearing of Billali.

When Leo regains consciousness after Billali leaves, muscular black soldiers block the doors. Then white-robed, platinum blonde Ayesha (pronounced "Aye-yee-shah" here and in the 1668 sequel) makes her grand entrance, beguiling Leo with gentle smiles. Suddenly, he no longer wants to escape! Ayesha prompts Leo to recognize her: "I am Ayesha, whom some call She-Who-Waits. And do you know who you are?" Nope. She tells him he's the reincarnation of



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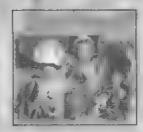








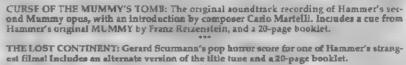








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Kallıkrates, her long-dead love

Leo. who doesn't seem to be taking in the detans, had eagerly locked lips with Ustane in the alley bittenew this very fast worker picks up Ayesha's right in on her, and kiss es her in en as She Mas to persuatte him to fulfill his ancient destiny with a long and dangerous ourney,

across the

Desert of

Lost Souls, to the Mountains of the Moon, a long and dangerous journey. At its end, everything you desire will be yours: power, riches, glory"

'And you?" he asks, getting back to the point

"Everything you desire," She says. She gives him a map and a ring to return to her at the end of his quest. By next morning, when Leo returns with Holly and Job, the apart-

ment stands empty. She has vanished

Leo persuades his friends to accompany him across the desert, to the tune of some of Bernard's best march music not a horsey clippity-clop, but the more subtle, rolling rhythm of the camels ridden by the men. Though the geography's fuzzy (it's not even clear whether the expedition stays on the Palestinian side of the Sinai or crosses into Africa), photographing these scenes on location in a real (Israels) desert gives this SHE a grand sense of open air, blazmg heat, and vast space that couldn't have been faked with mid-sixties technology on a sound stage

Ayesha sends nomadic raiders to loot the travellers' camp, steal their transportation, but leave the men alive, to test their mettle. After the battle, foraging for supplies among the dead attackers, the travellers fail to notice that one of the corpses wears a gold medallion with 1 co's por-lrait Increasingly desperate, they proceed on foot. (Cred ibility gap: long before they seem too dehydrated and disoriented to think straight, Leo, Job, and Holly all toss away their empty canteens after drinking the last of the water Leo might be foolish enough for this potentially fatal lack of foresight, but sensibly soldiers Holly and Job? Please!) Ustane, who's fallen in love with Leo, comes to the rescue

with water and supplies. Ustane takes the men to the village run by her father, Haumeid, the paternalistic but benevolent overseer of the Amahagger tribe Black actors and extras play the Ama-

ABOVE LEFT: Stunningly beautiful Ursula Andress posed for Playboy on a number of memorable occasions. including this photo shoot publicizing her starring role for Hammer Films. The title of the July 1965 pictorial was "She is Ursula Andress " ABOVE RIGHT: An early stage of Roy Ashton's old age and disintegration makeup for SHE's finale PAGE 39 LEFT Another stage in the makeup. PAGE 39 RIGHT: Ayesha has made the fatal mistake of bathing in the ice-blue Flame of Life for a second time!

hagger, in another departure from Haggard (André Morell as Haumeid and Mexican born Rosenda Monteros as his daughter. Ustane, more closely resemble Haggard's description of the racially ambiguous Amalagger ) Ustane and Haumeid, who fear Ayesha's cruelty, fry to talk Leo into going home. Haumeid warns that the Amahagger hate Ayesha and may be plotting a revolution.
The Amahagger, taking Leo's arrival as a sign of their

deliverance, believe the gods will help them if they offer him as a sacrifice. Leo's in no position to object he's nearly comatose from the festering wounds he suffered in the desert fight with the Bedouins. In a scene that replaces the usual Hot Pot ceremony (surprisingly passed over by a vibes, moves company famous for its violence and gore), the Amahagger, wearing little but louicloths, jewelry, and tribal paint, grab

him spread-eagled

between poles, They rip open Leo's shirt and it a out a par tom me in which a black woman in Straw wie and gro-Lesque white face acts out the story of Ayesha and Kallikrates This mime-Avesha hands a tribes-

Leo and ue

mar an enormous knife and points commandingly at Leo, but Us-

tane's scream merges with the sound of Billair's native battle-horn as he leads his mounted troops like the cavalry In the rescue

Virtuoso drummers on the soundtrack accompany the terrific dancing in the well staged sacrifice scene choreographed by Chrystine Lawson. Oddly enough, several reviewers have objected to all the drumming and dancing but fans of well-played percussion music will wish this scene went on longer

With Leo freed but near death, Ustane joins the expedition torough the caves to the hidden city. Kuma (instead of Kor) Art director Robert Jones and construction manager Arthur Banks outdid themselves with the colossal stairs and gates to Kuma, guarded by a gigantic statue of an impassive ancient warrior with a spear

In Kuma, Ho sy finds the High Priest Billali meditating in a hall lined with niches, each containing a mummy and a lighted candle. Billah explains that these are his ancestors, the High Priests who died before him Holly asks why they've always done Ayesha's blidding, when "She's only a woman, and alone . . and you're men." Billall explains that it is because men die, while She lives on, ammortal. Holly answers, "No one lives forever, and no one was born to be the vassal of another " Billah denies wanting his treedom. He wants only to fulfill his destiny Holly says, "And yours, I suppose, is to fill the next alcove. I can't believe you're such a fool.

Billali replies, quietly and with great dignity, "No. Mc Holly, I am not such a fool."

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gold helmet with feathers. Her costume suggests the phoeix, who burns alive and rises from the ashes

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> Alone with Ayesha after the executions, Holly, Leo and Job remonstrate with She. "Was that barbaric execution

> necessary?" Leu asks Avesha coldly defends her actions to protect "my abso-

hate power" over "these pathatic creatures." When Holly objects. She asks him. "Is your world so much better? Your world where men kill each ther by the millions in the dom? Your world that Continued on

page 40





Kallıkrates, her long-dead love

Leo, who doesn't seem to be taking in the details, had eagerly locked lips with Ustane in the alley, but now this very tast worker picks up Ayesha's vibes, moves right in ön her, and kisses her, even as She tries to persuade him to fulfill his ancient destiny with a long and dangerous journey, across the Desert of Lost Souls, to

the Mountains of the Moon, a long and dangerous journey. At its end, everything you desire will be

yours power, riches, glory "

"And you?" he asks, getting back to the point.

"Everything you desire," She says. She gives him a map and a ring to return to her at the end of his quest. By next morning, when Leo returns with Holly and Job, the apart-

ment stands empty. She has vanished

Leo persuades his friends to accompany him across the desert, to the tune of some of Bernard's best march music: not a horsey clippity-clop, but the more subtle, rolling rhythm of the camels ridden by the men. Though the geography's fuzzy (it's not even clear whether the expedition stays on the Palestinian side of the Sinai or crosses into Africa), photographing these scenes on location in a real (Israeli) desert gives this SHE a grand sense of open air, blazing heat, and vast space that couldn't have been faked with mid sixties technology on a sound stage.

Ayesha sends nomadic raiders to loot the travellers' camp, steal their transportation, but leave the men alive, to test their mettle. After the battle, foraging for supplies among the dead attackers, the travellers fall to notice that one of the corpses wears a gold medallion with Leo's portrait. Increasingly desperate, they proceed on foot. (Credibility gap' long before they seem too dehydrated and disoriented to think straight, Leo, Job, and Holly all toss away their empty canteens after drinking the last of the water. Leo might be foolish enough for this potentially fatal lack of foresight, but sensible soldiers Holly and Job? Please!) Ustane, who's fallen in love with Leo, comes to the rescue with water and supplies.

Ustane takes the men to the village run by her father, Haumeid, the paternalistic but benevolent overseer of the Amahagger tribe. Black actors and extras play the Ama-

ABOVE LEFT: Stunningly beautiful Ursula Andress posed for Playboy on a number of memorable occasions, including this photo shoot publicizing her starring role for Hammer Films. The title of the July 1965 pictorial was "She is Ursula Andress." ABOVE RIGHT: An early stage of Roy Ashton's old age and disintegration makeup for SHE's finale. PAGE 39 LEFT: Another stage in the makeup. PAGE 39 RIGHT: Ayesha has made the fatal mistake of bathing in the ice-blue Flame of Life for a second time!

hagger, in another departure from Haggard. (André Morell as Haumeid and Mexican-born Rosenda Monteros as his daughter, Ustane, more closely resemble Haggard's description of the racially ambiguous Amahagger.) Ustane and Haumeid, who fear Ayesha's cruelty, try to talk Leo into going home. Haumeid warns that the Amahagger hate Ayesha and may be plotting a revolution

The Amahagger, taking Leo's arrival as a sign of their deliverance, believe the gods will help them if they offer him as a sacrifice. Leo's in no position to object: he's nearly comatose from the festering wounds he suffered in the desert fight with the Bedouins. In a scene that replaces the usual Hot Pot ceremony (surprisingly passed over by a company famous for its violence and gore), the Amahagger, wearing little but loincloths, jewelry, and tribal paint, grab

Leo and tie him spread-eagled between poles. They open rip Leo's shirt and play out a panlomime, in which a black woman in a straw wig and grotesque whiteface acts out the story of Ayesha and Kallikrates. This mıme-Ayesha hands a tribesman an enormous knife

and points commandingly at Leo, but Ustane's scream merges with the sound of Billali's native battle-horn as he leads his mounted troops like the cavalry

Virtuoso drummers on the soundtrack accompany the terrific dancing in the well-staged sacrifice scene, choreographed by Chrystine Lawson. Oddly enough, several reviewers have objected to all the drumming and dancing, but fans of well-played percussion music will wish this scene went on longer

With Leo freed but near death, Ustane joins the expedition through the caves to the hidden city, Kuma (instead of Kor). Art director Robert Jones and construction manager Arthur Banks outdid themselves with the colossal stairs and gates to Kuma, guarded by a gigantic statue of an impassive

ancient warrior with a spear.

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The audience's first view of the room is the smoking pit in the middle of the floor. Trumpets announce Ayesha's grand entrance. The travellers sit with her on a dais overlooking the pit. She has dropped the sweetness-and-light persona She presented to Leo in Palestine. Now, She wears rich, shimmering gold and bronze robes, with a cape of gray feathers and a

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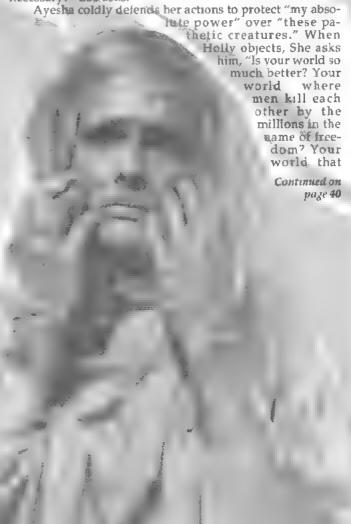
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# NORDS WITH

Interview by Jessie Lilley Text by Richard Valley

She is a creature of classic grace and sensual allure, the quintessence of all that is female and, with virtually no effort on her part, the acknowledged high priestess of that cinematic clan of heavenly bodies, the Sex Goddesses.

Thus wrote an anonymous scribe for the June 1965 edition of Playboy, his text accompanying a pictorial feature promoting the Hammer Film version of SHE (1965) The Sex Goddess in question was, of course, Ursula Andress—who had achieved stardom as Honey Ryder in the first James Bond film, DR. NO (1962)the photographer was her then-husband, actor/director John Derek Andress had refused to undress for her film role as Ayesha ("It's often sexier to keep your clothes on"), but had voiced no objection to posing completely nude for Hugh Heiner's famous "Entertainment for Men." She explained, "I'm not against nudity when it is used for a purpose and is done with a maximum of taste, style, and class." In other words, what she was unwilling to do to publicize her movie, she was willing to do to publicize John Derek, whose own postacting purpose, it can be argued, consisted mainly of exploiting his wives and destroying their careers in the process. Said Andress

You see, I never wanted to be a film star. In fact, I turned down dozens of roles so I could stay with my husband and travel wherever he went. After SHE, I may never make another picture, and then again, I may. Films aren't my whole life, it's my marriage that must always come first."

Continued on page 76

Job (Bernard Cribbens) Horace Holly (Peter Cushing), Ayesha (Ursula Andress) and Leo Vincey (John Richardson) observe the Lost City of Kuma in the 1965 production of SHE.



### EMPIRE OF THE IMAGINATION

Continued from page 39
has not long to live—a few decades only before it destroys itself! Then what will be left? I will show you. This will be left." She leads them to a window, where they look down on the desolate ruins of an ancient city. "But my world will not end. It will begin again, here . . . " and she looks at Leo. Holly says gently but cynically that She is not the first

one to dream of absolute power, and She won't be the last.

People don't think of Hammer and serious political commentary as natural companions, yet SHE relates 1918 to the social and political turmoil of the mid sixties. Consider 1964 alone, the year the movie was filmed. Both the United States and the Soviet Union tested nuclear weapons in the atmosphere. Civil war between Congolese and Belgians raged in what was then the Belgian Congo. Ethiopia fought Somalia. Cypriots fought Turks in Cypress The Olympics barred South Africa from participation, because of Apartheid. Martin Luther King received the Nobel Peace Prize. Jack Ruby was sentenced to death for murdering Lee Harvey Oswald, the assassin of President John F Kennedy. Thousands rioted in Harlem. Following the Tonkin Gulf incident, the USA sent 5,000 more "advisors" to Vietnam and began air strikes there. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act. In Saudi Arabia, Faisal wrested control from King Saud. The last French troops left Algeria. In Zanzibar, nationalists revolted against the Arab government. Tanganyika and Zanzibar united, to become the Republic of Tanzania. Morocco and Algeria finally ended a border war Moslems and Hindus fought each other in Calcutta In Cairo, 13 Arab nations voted to prohibit Israel from using the waters of the Jordan River for irrigation Malta gained independence from the British Commonwealth. Seventythree years of British colonial rule ended in Northern Rhodesia, renamed the Republic of Zambia. The British fought down rebellions in three former colonies, Tanganyika, Kenya, and Uganda. Lenny Bruce went on trial for obscenity In Indonesia, President Sukarno told the United States to "go to hell." Brezhnev deposed Krushchev in the USSR. The Chinese detonated their first atomic bomb

The times, they were a-changin'. Improved worldw.de communications meant that everyone who paid attention to the news knew about all these events, and more. People realistically feared that the Cold War between the USA and the USSR might escalate into a war hot enough to inciner-

ate the planet-the flame of eternal death!

In many ways, SHE is only a typical Hammer movie, not a classic film, yet it embodies a philosophy of its time, a pessimistic view of frail human nature confronted with a culture that justifies atrocities. Leo, a handsome but empty man ("a face," as Billali calls him) is not a hero. He's not evil, either, but he's ordinary, inadequate to stand up against evil. Even after seeing proof that Ayesha is a cruel dictator, Leo remains smitten with her. Love conquers all, including morality. "Is there nothing I will not forgive you?" he muses when they're alone together.

"Nothing," She says confidently.

Later, Holly tells Leo that he might have wanted eternal life at Leo's age, and lived to regret it, but now he's older and wiser. The camera lingers on the innocent flame of his match as the wise father figure lights his pipe

Still later, Ustane (wearing a simple little see through white gown) also counsels Leo. She questions his plan to rule a revival of the ancient city. "She has bewitched you with promises of power and grandeur, while I can but offer you my heart and unending loyalty " Ayesha walks out on a balcony just in time to catch Leo in the act of kissing Ustane good-bye, and her jealous nature is reawakened

As the travelers once again gather in her throne room, a golden curtain drops from a hanging cage. In the cage, Ustane screams as she sees that she's suspended over the lava pit When Holly warns Ayesha that She will lose Leo if She murders Ustane, Ayesha asks Billali for the dagger She





used to kill Kallıkrates. She offers Leo the dagger, the only mortal object that can kill her, She says. If Leo kills Ayesha, Ustane will live. Leo takes the dagger, hesitates . . . and kneels before Ayesha submissively. In his passivity, Leo will follow whoever is stronger, or whoever is unscrupulous enough to jerk his chain the hardest.

Ayesha gloats to Holly, "Look at him He is no longer the man you knew. He is nothing." When she beckons to Leo to follow her out, he heels l.ke a whipped puppy.

Ayesha sprinkles her beloved corpse of Kallikrates with a liquid that dissolves the body but somehow leaves its clothes intact. Leo prepares to enter the sacred flame with Ayesha in order to become her eternal lover. Meanwhile, elsewhere in the palace, a soldier presents Ustane's father with an urn of her ashes. (Never mind how anyone retrieved the ashes from the lava!) When the soldier begins pouring the ashes disrespectfully on the floor, Haumeid signals an Amahagger attack. The civil war begins, with the white overseer leading the black rebellion.

Holly and Job try to find Leo in the chaos, and in doing so fight on the side of the Amahagger. The good guys end up siding with their former enemies, the black slaves, while the bad guys side with She, the white oppressors, and the black soldiers forced into her service.

Billali pursues his own agenda of revolution. No longer content to serve, he storms into Ayesha's grotto of the sa cred flame, deep in the caves. Jungle plants grow there, with nothing for light but the flame itself and a tiny sunlit chimney through the roof. In its yellow phase, the flame is deadly, but when it cools to blue, the flame bestows eternal life on those who bathe in it. Billali refuses to leave, claiming a right to immortality. Contemptuously, he tells Ayesha that Leo will always be afraid. "He is but a face." (Meanwhile, the barbarians are winning, down in the throne room, where they toss soldiers into the lava pit.) As Billali,

dressed in blue, heads for the blue flames of the pillar of fire, Leo tries to stop him in a ferocious sword fight.

Speaking with Pohle and Hart, Lee recalled: "I had a spectacular sword fight with John Richardson in the course of which he nearly decapitated me and I nearly beheaded an electrician when the sword blade broke in the course of the battle." In his autobiography, Lee wrote that filming this scene finally gave him the catharsis to break him out of his depression. "I felt my old self returning. I had thereafter to make a bid for immortality by stepping into the flames but she' transfixed me with a spear before I could make it I died to the best of my ability. It was like old times."

I died to the best of my ability It was like old times."

After spearing her loyal henchman in the back, Ayesha enters the flame with Leo. They kiss, wreathed in the blue glow (one of the few special effects that looks primitive, alas, it's an unconvincing, overly-bright blue gel on the lens for the color of the flame, combined with a double exposure). At first, Ayesha and Leo bathe in the flame as if it were a pleasant shower—until She begins to age! Leo emerges inscathed and presumably immortal, but She shrivels, then disintegrates, like a Hammer Films vampire

In a particularly nice touch, the wnite flowers hanging behind Leo's head as he watches Ayesha die are Angel's Trumpets (Datura hybrids, related to Jimson weed), also known as Destroying Angels—deadly poison in the guise of beauty. Unable to face immortal life without Ayesha, Leo decides to commit suicide by rushing back into the flame, but when it changes back to hot yellow, he backs off—a coward, just as Billali predicted.

The ending leaves many loose ends and questions, especially the big one about Leo's unworthiness for eternal life. It's an obvious setup for a sequel—and in 1968, Hammer complied, releasing THE VENGEANCE OF SHE.

Concluded Next Issue . . . .

In our 10 years of publishing, Scarlet Street has occasionally journeyed down its share of fascinating byways, to lush green jungles with Tarzan of the Apes and Sheena, to tropic  $\Psi$ climes in search of the Blue Lagoon, and—in this very issue—to Antarctica and Africa on the trail of She Who Must Be Obeyed With that in mind, we welcome you to our latest feature Side Streets where we'll regularly explore genres not usually covered in our pages. And what better way to start the trip than with three very famous travelers . . .?

hey defied logic. They defied common sense They 1gnored the dictates of good filmmaking and even story structure. They started almost by accident and carried on sporadically for 22 years. With one possible exception, not one of these seven films could be called a good movie in any normal sense of the term. And yet the Road Pictures of Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, and Dorothy Lamour are among the unique treasures of the movies, offering, if not true freshness, the illusion of freshness—an illusion that has not dimmed in the 60 years since the first of these films was made Bob is still funny and appealing, Dotty still the ultimate in self-spoofing ersatz exotica, Bing still just about the coolest guy on the face of the earth and, best of all, these loopy movies still give the impression that they

were made up as they went along. Due to various legal consider ations, the films are no longer con trolled by one studio. The first four were part of the Paramount package acquired by MCA years ago and so are owned by Universal The fifth, released by Paramount but produced by Bing and Bob, has drifted around over the years and when last known belonged to Columbia. The sixth-and this is the most unfortunate case-has completely tallen into public domain, meaning that anyone with a print is free to market it, no matter its condition. And the seventh and final film, produced for United Artists, is still controlled by that company.

Undoubtedly, the films under Universal's banner are the lucky ones, since Universal is the most dedicated of all the studios when it comes to marketing their vintage holdings. Having already released ROAD TO SINGAPORE (1940), ROAD TO ZANZIBAR (1941), ROAD TO MOROC-CO (1942), and ROAD TO UTOPIA (1945) on tape and laser, it's not surprising to find them in equally fine transfers on DVD, though it's certainly questionable why they have chosen to release the films out of sequence by skipping the first

BOB

Despite its legendary status as the picture that forever established Bob and Bing, along with Dotty, as a team, ROAD TO SINGAPORE was mostly a happy accident—one that now seems a little schizophrenic in its results. Director Victor Schertzinger's tackled the assignment in two ways, trying for a genuinely exotic atmosphere in the straight sequences and letting Hope and Crosby fend for themselves in the comedy scenes. Depending on where one lands in it, ROAD TO SINGAPORE offers a pair of comic song and dance men openly defying the audience to take any of this seriously, while the director presents the more dramatic moments very seriously indeed. That it works as well as it does is almost miraculous.

Of course, a large measure of the success of the series is due to the byplay and camaraderie of Hope and Crosby, who very clearly enjoy each other's company. Mixing antagonism and affection, they are not unlike a pair of 10year-old boys, uncomfortable with expressing emotion toward each other unless it emerges in the guise of loving oneupmanship and endearing putdowns. The

BING

rested development as is evidenced by the sexual ambiguity of the relationship, which is firmly rooted in the belief that their friendship is more interesting and important than any entanglement with the opposite sex-at least till they run afoul of Dorothy Lamour. Even this isn't played with a great degree of seriousness, mosty because the luscious Lamour character (not fully formed in SINGAPORE) is basically "one of the guys," too, only wearing a sarong ROAD TO ZANZIBAŘ is de-

two verge on being textbook cases of ar-

signed along more bizarrely comic lines than was its predecessor SINGAPORE, however lamely, had something to say about the nature of freedom and living one's own life. Ironically, ZANZIBAR which has nothing whatever to say, says far more about such freedoms by virtue of its anarchic structure. The boys are more defined here precisely because they aren't defined at all ZANZIBAR has no illusions about characterizations. Bing and Bob are never anything but Bing and Bob playing at being Chuck Reardon and Hubert "Fearless" Frazier-and sport is even made of the phoniness of Dottie's exotica. As such, ZANZIBAR can be viewed as the first true Road Picture.

The Crosby/Hope relationship achieves its classic pattern with ZANZIBAR—Crosby as the fast-talking sharpster, making a living by his wits and Hope's susceptibility to his most outrageous proposals. When three of Bing's schemes end in disaster, the duo take time out for Hope to heal and Crosby to cook up another scheme—he shows up with a

DOTTIE

TH CROSBY. HOPE. AND LAMOUR

by Ken Hanke \_\_\_



PRFVIOUS PAGE: Bob Hope, Dorothy Lamour, and Bing Crosby relax on the set of ROAD TO BALI (1952), the only road picture made in color. ABOVE: Princess Shalmar (Lamour), Jeff Peters (Crosby), Turkey Jackson (Hope) and Mihirmah (Dona Drake) take it on the lam on the ROAD TO MOROCCO (1942).

charmingly unrealistic process-work octopus in a tank! "Probably the greatest idea I ever had. Get this for a set up—we'll build a tank a little bigger than this, see. We'll dress you up like a pearl diver—little sarong or something on you—then you hop into the tank and wrestle with him like you did with Bonzo the Bear!" Crosby's suggestion that they train the supposedly sinister cephalopod are to no avail. "Train him? I'd look fine swimming around with a chair and a whip! You can't train an octopus They only know from one thing—grab you quick and suck the blood outta you. How would I look swimming around with no blood?" asks Hope. "Just the same," they answer in unison.

The comedy in ZANZIBAR, much of it rooted in the belief that the viewer has seen the previous film (Hope quips, "He musta seen the picture," when a villain short-circuits the famous patty-cake routine), remains fresh and funny. The big moments—a wild scene in which the boys irritate some natives by playing a set of "jungle telegraph" drums, a fight with a gorilla, the cannibal tribe (complete with insane subtitles when the natives debate whether or not the boys are deities—"If he's a god, I'm Mickey Mouse!"), a mock funeral for Lamour where the only memorial recitations the boys can recall are "Dangerous Dan McGrew" and "The Face on the Barroom Floor"—all work splendidly. Even the smaller moments, such as Hope's penchant for trying to hold onto the last bill ("Sticky, ain't it?") every time he pays a debt (a trait he was still exhibiting 30 years

later in 1969's HOW TO COMMIT MARRIAGE), delight with invention and a giddy sense of fun.

Apart from an almost total disregard for structure, ROAD TO MOROCCO offers very little that was not done in ZANZIBAR. (Indeed, Lamour was better served by her Donna LaTour in the previous entry than she is here by the less self-parodying Princess Shalmar.) Still, anarchy reigns supreme and the resultant sloppy, anything-for-a-laugh atmosphere conveys itself to the audience as lovably vintage screwiness. The curious sense of being in on the jokes is naturally enhanced by background information on the picture. As a result, an already funny bit-a camel spitting in Hope's face, seemingly on cue-becomes even funnier when it's known that the moment was completely acciden tal, the result of the ill-tempered animal taking it into its head to spit at Hope. Its spontaneity is saved for us by the smooth professionalism of Hope and Crosby (who tells the camel, "Good girl!") and the good sense of director David Butler to keep the cameras rolling

There are so many delightful and hilarious moments in MOROCCO that it's impossible to catalogue them. Gags range from the smallest of touches—cartoonish references to Hope s smoking in the "powder room" as the cause of the shipboard explosion that lands them in North Africa—to the most elaborate set piece, the "divide and conquer" free-for-all staged to distract bad guy Anthony Quinn in order to save Lamour. Again, Crosby is the sharp one, ready





Some Things Never Change Department: In 1941's ROAD TO ZANZIBAR, Bing Crosby conned Bob Hope into taking a flight with a homemade pair of bat wings. It didn't work. Twenty-one years later, in THE ROAD IO HONG KONG, the wings had been turned in for a jet-propelled (and low slung) back pack, but Der Bingle was still trying to get Ol' Ski-nose off the ground. It didn't work. PAGE 45: Dorothy Lamour was already Paramount's jungle queen when she was cast in ROAD TO SINGAPORE (1940) to provide Hollywood's idea of authenticity. She's pictured here in ALOMA OF THE SOUTH SEAS, a 1941 tropic island epic scripted by Donovan's Brain creator Curt Siodmak.

to take advantage of Hope at every opportunity. In this entry, he goes so far as to plan a spot of cannibalism with Hope on the menu. Later, he resorts to such relatively minor transgressions as selling Hope into slavery without so much as asking why the buyer wants him. ("I didn't want to queer the deal ") Learning that Hope is slated to marry Lamour through this sale, Crosby tries to take his friend's place. With this in mind, Hope's subsequent behavior-trying to fob Crosby off on Lamour when he learns that the sole function of his husbandly duties is to fulfill a prophecy that her first husband will die within a week of the marriage—comes as not just understandable, but even fairly

mild in the way of retaliation.

Inveterate ad-libbers (albeit often with the aid of their gag writers), there's always a sense of spontaneity about Hope and Crosby's work in the Road pictures, but MO-ROCCO seems entirely off the cuff Even Frank Butler and Don Hartman joined in the anarchic mood, with a screenplay that at first mildly undercuts its believability, then plunges wildly into outright contempt for storytelling conventions. (They wound up nominated for an Academy Award ) Early in the film, Lamour is handed the improbably flowery line, "When the moon in its last quarter silvers the blossoms of the almond tree," as the time of her wedding. "That's Tuesday night about nine," she quickly adds, killing the exotica in its tracks. The screenplay reaches its zenith when the writers paint themselves into a corner. Having trussed our heroes in sacks and marooned them in the desert, the scene merely dissolves to the pair free of their bonds, crossing the sands. "Say, how did we get loose with our hands and feet tied and everything?" Hope asks. "If we told anybody, they'd never believe us," Crosby informs him confidentially. "Oh. Let's not tell 'em, huh?" suggests Hope. "Shh!" admonishes Crosby as they trudge on, happily sidestepping the plot.

Structurally (if such a word can be used), the film's climax is clearly modeled on that of ZANZIBAR, with the 'peaceful" meeting of two tribes of otherwise warring Arabs replacing the cannibals. Lacking the strong central set piece of Hope's fight with the gorilla, MOROCCO opts instead to pile gag upon gag with ever snowballing screwiness. The basic set up, with the boys disguised as Arabs and sowing the seeds of dissent between the tribes, is well conceived. However, it's the wealth of invention-dribbleglasses, makeshift whoopie cushions, cigarettes laced with gunpowder ("What're you doin'? Makin' reefers?" inquires Hope in a line that amazingly passed the censors)—that

makes the sequence work so well, deftly reducing the whole idea of the situational menace to nothing more than schoolboy pranks. The fact that the villainous Arabs respond in kind is clearly drawn from the way the cannibals took to the patty-cake routine in ZANZIBAR, but here it's more carefully built up, making the climactic big scene the least perfunctory and most satisfying in the series.

For those of you who don't go to the movies, let me introduce myself. My name is Robert Benchley. Well, no matter. For one reason or another, the motion picture you're about to see is not very clear in spots. As a matter of fact, it was made to demonstrate how not to make a motion picture, and at the same time win an Academy Award. Now, someone in what is known as the Front Office has thought that an occasional word from me might help to clarify the plot and other vague portions of the film. Personally, I

doubt it. Shall we go?

Despite Benchley's introduction (the humorist's last screen appearance), ROAD TO UTOPIA does not suffer from a lack of clarity, nor a plot that needs explanation, and that's mostly what's wrong with it. Screenwriters Norman Panama and Melvin Frank, who had worked on Hope's radio show and were responsible for the original story of MY FAVORITE BLONDE (1945), here opted to ignore the nearly narrativeless approach of MOROCCO Instead, they contrived a story overburdened with plot, and then proceeded to commit cinematic heresy by not including so much as a single patty-cake routine. This is not to say that LTOPIA is bad. If is anything but. However, all too often it plays like a straight film with the comic lunacy grafted on. Much of that lunacy, however, is very funny indeed. The film also boasts the classic Hope/Crosby duet, "Put It There, Pal," which is almost the equal of the title tune from MO-ROCCO, and hands Lamour one of the best songs of her career, "Personality."

The film's opening is particularly good, presenting Hope and Lamour as "old folks at home," whose peaceful evening is shattered by the unmistakable sound of Crosby singing. (The song, "Sunday, Monday, and Always," comes from the 1943 Crosby/Lamour vehicle, DIXIE). "Pa, do you hear what I hear?" asks Lamour. "I hope not," groans Hope. "That voice!" enthuses Lamour. "What voice?" sneers Hope. "Listen, what does it sound like?" she presses. "Who'd be selling fish at this hour?" wonders Hope When Crosby finally appears onscreen (accompanied by two glamour girl "nieces"), Hope complains, "And I thought this

was gonna be an A picture."

This, of course, is only the framing preliminary to the story of ust how—against all likelihood and Road tradition—Hope did win the girl and get the goldmine. It's this story that makes up the bulk of the film, which places Crosby and Hope in possession of Lamour's stolen map and the identities of the murderous Sperry and McGurk (Robert Barrat and Nestor Paiva). Gags and quips abound, many of which are brilliantly surrealistic—a snow-capped mountain magically transforms into the Paramount logo, Santa Claus makes a guest appearance, a fish refusing to be caught emerges from a hole in the ice to discuss the point, and a bear (mistaken by Hope in the middle of the night for Lamour') grumbles, "A fine thing! A fish they let talk! Me, they won't give one stinking line." UTOPIA could have been the best of all Road Pictures were it not for the fact that it insists that the plot is somehow important. Messrs. Panama, Frank, and Walker seem to have thought they were making a Klondike epic in the manner of Chaplin's THE GOLD RUSH (the 1925 film then fresh in the mind with Chaplin's brilliantly narrated 1942 reissue), when in fact they were closer to W C Fields' 1933 short film, THE FATAL GLASS OF BEER Still, it's a film with many fine moments, including one in which Hope sidles up to a bar, orders a lemonade and then, fearful lest the other patrons think him unmanly, adds gruffly, "In a dirty glass." The in-jokes are all in place, too, the best of which has Crosby losing a talent contest to a trained monkey, prompting Hope to sneer, "Next time I bring Sinatra."

The DVD releases of MOROCCO and UTOPIA, which were contracted to Image Entertainment by Universal, are little more than adequate. They are utterly bereft of extras (even the tapes sometimes offered trailers) and, while the transfers are good, both films could stand some restoration work. Even at that, the production values are splendid—for example, in the Moroccan street (complete with twinkling stars in the backdrop sky) where Crosby sings the delightful "Ain't Got a Dime to My Name."

While not as funny as either ZANZIBAR or MOROC-CO, ROAD TO RIO is on surer footing than UTOPIA. Once again, no effort is made to convince the viewer that the proceedings are in any way real. Good songs (a staple of the series) and guest bits for The Andrews Sisters, Jerry Colonna, and the marvelous Wiere Brothers, plus Gale Sondergaard's svelte villainy and a Carmen Miranda impression from Hope make RIO an unqualified delight.

Part of the success of RIO is attributable to director Norman Z. McLeod, a former cartoonist and one of the few filmmakers to survive directing two Marx Brothers films (1931's MONKEY BUSINESS and 1932's HORSE FEATH-ERS). In RIO, McLeod's own vision fits like a glove right from the film's opening credits, which feature the animated names of Crosby, Hope, and Lamour doing a samba. The sense that one is watching an animated cartoon with living people is keenly felt throughout and helps sustain the fantastic world in which the action takes place.

In many respects, RIO is a compendium of the previous Road Pictures—its "Apalachicola, Fla." vaudeville song and dance number is a (better) version of the "Good Time Charhe" turn in UTOPIA, the burning of the carnival that sends the boys on the run to Brazil is an elaborate variation on the opening of ZANZIBAR, and so on. In effect, RIO is a summing up of all the films: the ultimate Road Picture for fans.

The gags and routines in RIO are almost nonstop and many are as physical as verbal, especially the barbering scene (filched from McLeod's MONKEY BUSINESS). If anything, the Hope/Crosby characters are more disreputable than usual, with Der Bingle up to his old tricks. He secures them a booking with Johnson's Mammoth Carnival ("The seals couldn't make it, huh?" moans Hope), without, of course, bothering to inform Hope that he's slated to ride a bicycle on the high wire (Watch for horror great Tor Johnson in this sequence) The typical doublecross is in effect immediately, but Hope is here presented as amazingly lowdown himself-before sneaking from their hotel room, he pauses to swipe the Gideon Bible!

The jokes regularly verge on the unwholesome. After Hope accidentally burns down the carnival, the vengeful owner tells his minions, "If you break his legs, don't tear the tights, they belong to me." Later, when Crosby defends his desire to help Lamour by comparing her plight to that of another girl, Hope recoils in horror at the memory. "You mean the wife of that sword swallower? Chased us six blocks, burping daggers all the way!" One routine (pilfered from Crosby's 1936 film ANYTHING GOES) is built around the duo swaying back and forth to simulate the rocking of a ship, the better to nauseate a passenger out of his breakfast.



## Come Back,

# Shan

## An Interview by Kevin G. Shinnick

ith his blonde hair and good looks, Shane Briant was the Golden Boy of Hammer Horror in the latter days of the company's 20year reign of cinematic terror, appearing in STRAIGHT ON TILL MORNING and DEMONS OF THE MIND (both 1972), CAPTAIN KRONOS: VAMPIRE HUNTER (1973), and FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELD (1974). Surprisingly, Hammer didn's relegate him to bland hero roles, but cast him as troubled and sometimes psychotic-young men in his first three films, and as a baby faced mad scientist (opposite Peter Cushing's veteran madman) in his last. Taking a break from The Studio That Dripped Blood, Briant journeved to the United States, where he starred on late-night television in the 1975 Dan Curtis version of THE PICTURE OF DORMAN GRAY. Back in England, he made an impression as a mascaraed and rouged male prostitute

in a dramatization of the life of gay icon Quentin Crisp, THE NAKED CIVIL SFR-VANT (1975). His other films include THE MACKINTOSH MAN (1973), HAWK THE SLAYER (1980), LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER (1981), MINNAMURRA (1989), and TUNNEL VISION (1995).

Shane Briant was born in London in 1946, and attended the law school at Trinity College Dublin. His first acting role came with a



stage production of UNDER MILK WOOD, for which he received a 1971 nomination from the London theater critics for Best Newcomer. In addition to acting, Briant is also a successful novelis with four books to his credit, including The Webber Agenda (1994), Withdas (1999), and Bite of the Lotue (2001). He's lived in Sydney, Australia, since 1983, and it was these that Scarlet Street found him for this rare interview ....

Shane Briant: I was born in London. My father, Keith Briant, was an author and my mother, Elizabeth Nolan, was an ac tress; she did plays in the West End plays with Rex Harrison and Trevor Howard and people like that.

Scarlet Street: Was it because of your mother's career that you became an actor

SB: It could have been that, I suppose, but it's really difficult to tell how one started I started at school My school had a tradition of taking Shakespearean tours overseas during the holidays, so I used to do that every year till I was about 17. Then I went to University Trunty Col lege-and studied law, and started acting professionally in my second year I finished my law degree, but I was in the University Players. Then I did plays professionally, and then television and films at the same time

SS: What was your first play?

5B: The first production I ever did professionally was HAMLET in Dublin 1 played the title role-a very good way of starting' (Laughs) I always say modern-day Hamlets are too old, by and large; he's always played by people who are 30 years old and he should be played by someone in his early twenties. I did several plays in Dublin, and then some television and a film called THE RED BARON. That was my very first film. I only had a tiny part.

And then I did a play called CHILDREN OF THE WOLF with Yvonne Mitchell, who had won a British Academy Award for WOMAN IN A DRESSING GOWN. That was in the West End, and through that I was put under contract to Hammer Films for two years.

SS: As a result of your role in CHILDREN

OF THE WOLF?

SB: Yes. It was kind of a modern-day Greek tragedy, about a woman who deserts her two children. Then, 21 years later, they entice her back to the old house where they used to live and confront her with what she's done. It had all these Greek classical tragic overtones to it. Eventually, they murder the father and the young boy murders his mother and is rejected by his sister. It's everything that you expect of a Greek tragedy-only set m modern days!

SS: All that family tragedy and hints of incest must have prepared you to star in Hammer's

DEMONS OF THE MIND

SB: Exactly! (Laughs) The head of Hammer Films, Michael Carreras, saw me in the play and thought I'd be right for the 6.lm

SS: You worked with one of the new crop of directors at the time Peter Sykes.

SB: I wonder what happened to Peter Sykes? Has he gone on to do any other things? I've never seen him again!

SS: Well, he also directed TO THE DEVIL A DAUGHTER, Hammer's last horror movie You also worked with Terence Fisher, on FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL

SB: Well, with Terry Fisher, he'd reached the stage where the film almost directed itself. He had his format and he knew exactly what worked and what didn't. He was extremely professional and a very nice man. Peter Sykes was very young at the time, and he was feeling his way more and trying new things, something a bit different He was trying to be innovative, whereas Terry Fisher was intent on giving the people who loved Hammer what they love best, which was the traditional Hammer film, another dose of the same thing sort of like TERMINATOR 15 (Laughs)

SS: DEMONS OF THE MIND was a psycho

logical thriller

SB: It was a new concept in terms of Hammer films There wasn't a monster anymore Well, there was a monster, but it was different in so far as they were trying to take it into the psychology of the thing instead of having vampires and monsters with three heads. In that respect, it was different

SS: You arrived on the scene late in Hammer's history They were looking for a new approach,

weren't they?

PREVIOUS PAGE: Shane Briant played a dedicated young doctor with an eye toward creating monsters in Hammer's FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL (1974) Earlier in the story, he made a considerable splash when he was hosed down in an insane asylum under the watchful eyes of Madeline Smith.



SB: Sir James Carreras had just left and his son, Michael, was in charge. To some extent they were a bit lost; I think they felt the loss of James a lot. The moment that he left, things began to fall apart. The other major executive, Anthony Hinds, also left at that time and Michael was left to sort it all out.

SS: He tried everything, including casting stants. Your sister in DEMONS OF THE MIND was originally going to be played by Marianne Faithfull

SB: Oh, right, yes! We all had a meeting over lunch at Elstree, and we were introduced to each other. I don't want to get myself into any litigation, but there were problems insuring Marianne at the time because she wasn't very well. I don't know what problems they were-they could have been medical or they could

of the latter. The insurers wouldn't take the risk on her.

\$\$: Well, her drug problems weren't exactly a secret. You did wind up with another pop singer in the cast Paul Jones

SB: Yes, that's right! They were trying to catch the youth market, in those days, if you could get a rock star in your movie, you immediately got a larger and maybe a more youthful audience. It's funny, but I saw Paul in London while I was doing a series recently. We were staying in the same hotel! (Laughs) I hadn't seen him in 20 years—actually 23 years, not since DEMONS OF THE MIND' He was doing a tour, singing old songs like Harry Connick Jr does, all the old melodies and not so much the Animal stuff. I sup-

SB: Well, he's getting older, as are we all. You can't change it, you know. Some peo-ple try, but—well, I think some people

are a bit ridiculous

SS: Quite a change of pace!

SS: There's a certain similarity between DE-MONS OF THE MIND and CAPIAIN KRONOS: VAMPIRE HUNTER They both have a brother and sister under the control of a demonic parent In DEMONS, your character is guilty of the crimes, but also innocent

SB: Well, in DEMONS, the character didn't know what he was doing! You couldn't really say that he was guilty. I don't think he felt any guilt over what he was doing until the end, when he was made aware of what he'd done and tried to kill himself and his father! I didn't characters as believable as possiblehorror pictures, too!



### "The stunt coordinator came over and said, 'Are you okay, Shane? That really looked great, but we have to do it again because you seemed to hesitate when Paul came through the window.' I said, 'I seemed to hesitate! What are you talking about, I seemed to hesitate! I thought the guy was dead!""

"You must never go alone to another man's room at night," and she says, "Why?" He says, "Never mind! You don't need to know these things!" Every day we used to fall around laughing Linda Purl and myself-we used to read through these parts early in the morning and laugh ourselves silly so that we could actually say it with some conviction during the day! If you have a poor script, it's much more challenging to do a good job of it. Any actor can make a success out of a really good script. That's why people win Oscars-not just because they're good actors, but because they've gotten one of the best parts of the year. You can be the best actor in the world and have a shitty script and never win an Oscar'

SS: Even with a horror script, don't you find aspects of the character to make it more interesting for yourself and the audience?

SB: I always wonder how I can make it more interesting. If the character is not really fleshed out that well, you do as much as you possibly can. If it's a fantas-tic part, you don't really need to do much else; you just need to make sure that the part is brought accurately and convincingly to the screen. If he's just a bad guy—well, I've played bad guys all my life, and a bad guy can be very boring if he's just a bad guy. If he's a bad guy with a flaw-for instance, that he happens to like children-that makes it interesting. I did a film with Mark Harmon called TILL THERE WAS YOU, and the bad guy was a bad guy all the way through. He gets shot at the end, and I said, "Look, why doesn't he die because of the one spark of human kindness he has in him, which eventually leads to his downfall?" My idea was that he should have a relationship quite inno-cent, with a little black kid. And every time he sees the little black kid, he aims his finger at him and says, "Bang, bang! You're dead!" At the end of the film, just as the bad guy is leaving with all the gold, the little black kid sees his gun, picks it up, and says, "Bang, bang' You're dead" and, of course, he shoots him SS: Nice touch!

SB. It made the character more interest ing. Even in LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOV-ER, where a lot of people think Sir Clifford is a beast, I portrayed him as a selfish man but tried to make the audience understand why he was so selfish.

SS: The business with the kid and the gun was

certainly a good idea. SB: Well, I have lots of ideas; I'm never short of ideas! (Laughs) The only problem is that quite often the director says, "We don't want to do that" or "We don't have time to do that" or "We don't need that," or the writer says, "I don't like that!" It depends on the type of production. When you have the leading role it's always pretty easy to do what you like, providing the director is on your side But if you have the third or fourth lead and try to flesh out your part and make it interesting, then the other actors—who are often, shall we say, a trifle selfish-try and put the kibosh on it.

SS: They think you're making too much of your part at the expense of theirs

SB: But I'm never short of ideas! Never! I always have too many ideas! People tell me, "No, that's ridiculous; that's too much, Shane!"

SS- Too many shadings!

SB: Too many shadings, yes—or else I'm making the character too bizarre! In THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY, there's a scene where Dorian goes to a brothel. In the script, Dorian asks the brothel keeper, the madem, for her daughter. It's never stated how old the daughter is, but the medam obviously takes great exception to the fact that Dorian wants to screw her daughter. Then he gives her so much money that she gives in, they go upstairs, he opens the door, and there's this very young girl. Well, ABC and the authorities in America said. "No, no, no! We can t possibly have someone going to bed with what looks like an underage girl. So the scene was going to be cull and I said to Glenn Jordan, the director "Let's do something where you don't actually see what's in the room, and let the audience's imagination fill in the details. It's even worse when you don't see it, and they can tromp ain about At? So in the scene asked the madam for something, but you didn't agar what it was She looks it me in disgust and I give her the money, then we go up to the room. The camera is behind me, and when I i pen the door the camera is positioned inside the room ooking at my reaction. Beland me, the modam is almost vom ting because it 5 so disgusting. I ook down at some hing in a bed, I look with absolute disgust and norror and then this awfull twisted smile comes to my face, as if to say, 'This is disgusting, but it's very interesting and maybe it's so bizarre I might do it'. We I when the show was broadcast, people said the scene where Dorlan goes into the room and makes love to a dwarf or deformed child was so horrible I said, "Whatever made you think it was a dwarf or deformed child?" They said, "Well, it was the expression on your face!"

SS: They filled in the blank with something they personally considered horrible

SB: Yes, which is more interesting than showing a 15-year-old girl. That's pretty run of the mill, isn't it?

SS: In the Ozarks, yes. Were you familiar with the Oscar Wilde novel before you played

SB: Oh, yes, I'd read it before! Most of the script was not faithful to the novel. They changed the story so they could introduce different characters, so Dorian Gray could fall in love and plan to marry. He never did that! I really couldn't understand why they chose to do that. I suppose somebody or other thought it was good

SS. They did the same thing in the 1945 film. The character of Dorwn Gray is so ambiguous that he's left open to a number of interpreta-tions, isn't he?

SB: He is yes Would he have led the same life had he aged instead of the portrait, would be have become corrupt without the nfluer ce of Sir Henry Wotton? I think he was influenced by Sir Henry originally Then when he saw that he could basically have a really good, decadent time because Sir Henry said, "You re young, enjoy yourself while it lasts!" and he realized that the porfrait would age and he could do anything and remain the same, that took him overboard. He thought, "Why should I bother being nice or doing the right thing? I can do whatever I like and I'll never grow old!"

SS Was DORIAN GRAY your first expert &

ence with American IV

SB: Yes, it was It was wonderful! Dang Curtis came to London because he tried to cast it in America and hadn't found anyone who was sufficiently English. At least that's what he told me. I saw him on a Wednesday and he said, "The only problem is that Dorian's a dark-haired boy "I said, "Oh no, no, no, Mr Curtis! You re thinking of the Hurd Hatticld ver-s. of He was dark haired in that, but actually in the book he's a blonde!" I thought I was just bulk hitting, but it turned out I was right! (Laughs) Dan said, Oh, really' I didn't realize!" So I saw nim on Wednesday, was cast on Thurs-day flew at on Friday, and was working in Cu ver City on Saturday morning! It was like every young actor's dream, be-cause I was only 22 or 23 at the time.

SS Another thing that got past the censors ras Derian's homosexuality, when he opens a deer and a young man is waiting for him SB: That was done to show Donan's de-

pravity, though it's not actually suggested in Wilde's book, Both Glenn and I thought, if you're doing a show in 1973 and all Dorian does is go to bed with women—well, what's so deprayed about that? So he drinks a lot' So he smokes! So what? You had to do something that the audience considered depraved.





LEFT. Dr. Simon Helder (Shane Briant) has his wounds tended to by the mute Sarah (Madeline Smith) in FRANK-ENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL, the last film in Hammer's famed Frankenstein series, RIGHT: Dr. Helder and Sarah lend a helping hand to Baron Victor Frankenstein (Peter Cushing), who-obviously-is preparing to lend a helping hand to his latest monstrosity.

SS: And given the times, homosexuality filled the bill. It's also hinted that Dorian's influence over Alan Campbell is a sexual one

SB: Exactly! When he persuades Alan Campbell to get rid of the artist's body, Alan says, "No! I won't do it!" Dorian says, "I don't want to threaten you, but let me just give you this list of names." They're all men's names. It seemed quite apparent that Alan Campbell was gay, and that Dorian had a hold over him in that respect, and that certainly he'd had an affair with him Alan even says, "I was waiting for you to call me, Donan."

SS: Until recently, there's been considerable hesitancy on the part of actors to play gay characters, yet you not only played Dorian Gray in the seventies but appeared as a gay man in THE NAKED CIVIL SERVANT

SB: That was one of the best shows I've ever done, I think Jack Gold is an ultra fine director, especially with actors. To some extent, he's been unlucky either with his choice of films or what he's been

offered. He's never been given a film worthy of his talent. But he was a terrific director-I remember him saying to the five of us playing the male hookers, "I just want you to go to town and really go over the top. Enjoy yourselves!" Most of the other guys were a bit embarrassed to really go the whole hog! I just thought, "Well, go for it! Have a good time! Who cares! If someone is going to suggest that I'm gay and can't play other roles, then I'll prove them wrong with the next one that I do!" Of course, if you're going to play nothing but gay roles, people think, "Oh, we can't have him! Everyone thinks he's gay!" For leading roles, that's probably important

SS. Possibly-but more than in the States, British actors are not afraid to take that risk

SB: No, that's true.

SS: On DORIAN GRAY, did you have any rehearsal period before taping began?

SB: We had eight days rehearsal, and then we shot it in four We did a three-

hour program from start to finish in 12 days, which must be some kind of a record! (Laughs) We were really going' We rehearsed in the Culver City studios-not the ones now, but on the old GONE WITH THE WIND lot, and then we shot it with four videotape cameras. We went from start to finish almost in order, from eight in the morning until eight

at night, nonstop

SS: So it was almost like doing a play? SB: Almost, yes We hardly ever had to reshoot thank God! In those days, I could remember my lines! (Laughs) As I get older it's harder to remember lines, but if a lot of people had cocked up their lines we would never have finished it in four days. Dan Curtis is a very strong character, strong-willed and a hard taskmaster. If he says you shoot it in four days, you shoot it in four days!

SS: You were lucky to have a good director SB: Glenn Jordan is one of the nicest and most talented people I know. I've been

LEFT: Dorian Gray (Shane Briant) has fallen in love with the innocent Sybil Vane (Vanessa Howard). Her suicide will be the first of Dorian's crimes and the first to mar the beauty of THF PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY. RIGHT: Briant and Lois Daine are Paul and Sara Durward, an aristocratic family beset by a vampiric heritage and bad hair days, in Hammer's innovative CAPTAIN KRONOS: VAMPIRE HUNTER (1973),





waiting about 23 years, now, to work with him again. I see him every time I get to the States. We have lunch, but he never has anything suitable for me. He seems to go from Emmy Award-winning production to Emmy Award winning-production. Mostly very American projects, but I'm sure that if he had a production that was suitable, he'd find something for me. When he did LES MISERABLES, he of fered me something, but unfortunately I was busy

SS. Do you have fond memories of the cast of DORIAN GRAY

SB: Oh, yes! Whenever I think of DOR-IAN GRAY, I remember the people who were in it with me Many went on to do wonderful things in the States. I went back to England, which I never should have done. I should have stayed and waited for my career to take an upturn, because that was a terrific showcase for

me. And it got very good notices! But I went back to England expecting them to call and, of course, nobody gives you a call in England; you're either there or you're not there! John Karlen went on to do CAGNEY AND LACEY, and Linda Kelsey did LOU GRANT Fionnula Flanagan went on to do HOW THF WFST WAS WON Most of the people in that show got very rich and I went back to England and got very poor! (Laughs) It makes me laugh, but obviously I made the wrong decision. Maybe it's the Curse of Dorian Gray!

SS: Whatever happened to your portrait from the show?

SB: On the last day, the prop man cut out the portrait-which was six feet long and four feet wide-and rolled it up and gave it to me, which was lovely. I went off to a party that Fionnula Flanagan was giving up in the hi.ls and I left it in the back of the cab' I figured it was lost, so I thought I'd put an ad in the trades "I ost! The Picture of Dorian Gray Apply

changed!" (Laughs) SS: Was it ever jound?

SB: Yes, it was found. I rang up the cab company the next day and they had it. So I still have it -but it hasn't changed! SS: You keep praying for it to change, right? SB: I do! I never used to stop praying! I used to stand in front of it and say, "Please I'm getting old is there something you can do?" (Laughs) But no, the picture is still as good as ever and I'm get ting old and wrinkled.

SS: Speaking of staying young forever, let's talk about STRAIGHT ON TILL MORN-ING, the Hammer film in which you were kind of a murderous Peter Pan in Mod London It was based on a play, wasn't it?

SB: Yes, and to some extent the play wasn't structured well enough. One should have felt very sorry for him, but one did n't, really He should never have killed his dog. That's the big mistake in any movie, to kill a dog, because the audience doesn't like that, I don't like it myself. You should never be unkind to children or kill dogs if you want anyone to have sympathy with you.

\$\$: Were there references to J.M. Barrie's PE-TER PAN that didn't make it into the film?

SB: Not really, no. Apart from the fact that Peter calls the gul Wendy, there was nothing Of course, the title-first star to the right and straight on till morning—is the direction to Never Never Land. It was quite a nice idea, but it didn't get good reviews, basically because it was too violent and reviewers didn't like that very much I remember the critic in The Sunday Times, she said, "really trashy and Rita Tushingham deserves a better film, and so does Mr. Briant." I thought, "Oh, that's good!" and then she said, "So indeed does the dog!" (Laughs) Hammer was really hoping the film would mark their transition from Gothic horror to different films and quality pictures STRAIGHT ON FILL MORNING was a disappointment



put in, "Found The Picture of Dorian the world on a string in FRANKENSTEIN AND and it was very difficult for her to Gray!" and put in brackets, "But it's THE MONSTER FROM HELL.

in that respect, because it didn't get good reviews and didn't make money.

SS: It got a very poor release from the distributor, which couldn't have helped.

SB: When I signed with Hammer, I was supposed to do a remake of something like JANE EYRE—not JANE EYRE itself, but something along those lines. It appealed to me, because it wasn't just another vampire picture. I was also supposed to star in a biography of Bram Stoker. I was going to play Stoker, but instead of doing those two projects I ended up making DEMONS OF THE MIND, STRAIGHT ON TILL MORNING, and the Frankenstein film. Instead of doing something that really interested me, I did FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL, which was just another Hammer horror picture. They didn't want to take another risk, they thought they'd get Terry Fisher and do another Frankenstein movie and make money. Get themselves out of trouble!

SS: After those films and CAPTAIN KRO-NOS: VAMPIRE HUNTER, Hammer terminated your contract.

SB: They were in too much financial trouble. They didn't want me under contract doing nothing. It was better for them to have no one under contract and just get people when they needed them

SS: Did you have refusal rights on scripts? SB: No, nothing like that It was just the beginning of my career and I was glad to be under contract.

SS: CAPTAIN KRONOS was another attempt to take Hammer Horror in a new direction. Brian Clemens, who's best known for THE AVENGERS, wrote and directed it. Was he a talented director?

SB: He was okay Is he still alive?

SS: Yes, alive and working.
SB: Then I d better say he was wonderful! (Laughs) I didn't think CAPTAIN KRO-VAMPIRE HUNTER was tremen-

dously successful. It had some nice ideas, but even in those days it was a bit passé. I liked the idea of the Kronos character played by Horst Janson, and John Cater as his hunchbacked assistant, but I thought the vampire's family was ridiculous, frankly We were dressed up in ridiculous clothes, and I thought the actress playing my sister couldn't act to save her life! The mother had such dreadful lines! Home came her husband, looking like he'd just been unearthed from a tomb.

SS: Which was pretty much the case. SB: . . . with worms crawling out of

his eyes, and the mother said something like, "Come to me, my darling, and give me a big kiss!" I mean, it's a bit bizarre.

SS: Well, love is blind. Lois Daine, who played your sister, wore men's clothing and had a short, mannish, out-of-veriod hair style

SB: It was really an atrocious design! There was no reason for that thought she looked quite ridiculous Shane Briant" and then the next day With the help of Shane Briant, Peter Cushing has in that wig and those silly clothes, give any performance under those

circumstances. Well, why they put me in an incredibly silly Shirley Temple wig is something I can't imagine, either! It's not a film I remember with affection When I look back on it, I think, "Christ" What must I have looked like!" (Laughs) SS: Did you get to use your own har in FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL?

SB: Yes, well, I always try and use my own hair. Unless you're working with top-class American professionals, they tend to just slap an awful wig on you and you look like a piece of shit!

SS: So the hair was fine, but you didn't like the film?

SB: I felt it was scraping the bottom of the barrel for ideas. I didn't think it was anything particularly new-just building another body, really. The body looked ludi crous. It would have been better if it didn't look like this awful, rubberized suit. I remember talking to Dave Prowse



# The Pictures of

Part Two of a study of the Oscar Wilde classic and its many dramatizations 🛴

## by Lelia Loban and Richard Valley

n Marck 1, 1945, MGM released the first sound film version of THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY. Albert Lewin wrote and directed. The film starred George Sanders as Lord Henry Wotten, Angela Lansbury as Sybil Vane, and Hurd Hatfield as Dorian Gray, with MGM contract play-ers Donna Reed and Peter Lawford as characters ab-sent from the original Oscar Wilde novel.

Rumors persist to this day that Lawford was considered for the load, and the kandidate, between Langlish actor—ould not have been an inspectoprist choice to play the handsome, bisexual, English Dorlan, has been appeared over for the section of Sommersal.

American Hatfield, Neither actor embodied Wilde's description of the novel's blonde, blue-eyed Adonis, but by 1945 very few (if any) filmgoers remembered the 55scription of the novel's blonde, blue-eyed Adonis, but by 1945 very few (if any) filmgoers remembered the 55-year-old book's details of the popular notion that Wilde's blonds, blue-eyed loves, Lord Alfred Drugles was the tospication (The notion was incorrect, Filds never met Douglas till well after The Picture of Dorian Trey had been published.) In sapitaly failing health at the time of the pressions, and allred was in no condition to remind anyone, and by March 25, at age 75, he was deed.

was dead.

Under the leadership of "beniro" tyrani Loui: 5.

Mayer, MGM was considered the most conservative of
Hollywood's major studios, the home of splasky backstage musicals starring Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland, nonpital diameter three with Lione Barryonne tromides, and family comedies with Rooney as teenaged Andy and Lewis Stone as his preferraturally wise dad, judge Hardy II was MGM that force Mich and these Charles (William Fowell and Myrna Low) to sat that he come in the company of the booze and become doting parents, and, even though they allowed Laram and I me trabany well-smuller on Maureen O'Sullivan) to live in a tree without benefit of clergy, they gave them a child only via airmail, when a: plane carrying a baby Boy (Johnny Sheffield) crashed en-ther African excarpment.

Hot the studio had a percent side that periodically but bled to the surface in what adopt best be called

MGM's Big Parade of Kinkiness. FREAKS (1932), with its titular outcasts and fun-filled finale of castration and mutilation, may have shocked Mayer into sweeping it under the corporate carpet, but the film was hardly an aberrationjust consider some of MGM's other pictures from the same year RED DUST was sparked by the frank sexual shenanigans of Jean Harlow, whose comparatively realistic persona made her more of a threat to "common decency" than Paramount's Mae West. KONGO, a remake of the silent WEST OF ZANZIBAR (1928), starred Walter Huston in Lon Chaney's role of a crippled maniac who tortures and sells into harlotry a rival's daughter (Virginia Bruce), only to learn that the syphilis-riddled girl is his own. In THE MASK OF FU MANCHU, Dr. Fu (Boris Karloff) not only parades before our eyes a grotesque gallery of death devices, but makes bloody good use of them, while nymphomaniacal daughter Fah Lo Suee (Myrna Loy) strips and whips the hunky hero (Charles Starrett) before turning him over to daddy for chemical "refinement." All in all, it's a wonder

the studio motto wasn't changed to "More Stars in Our Gutter Than There Are in the Heavens.

The advent of the Production Code in 1933 calmed things down considerably, but never completely. MGM offered Saturday-night sadists MAD LOVE (1935), in which Dr. Gogol (Peter Lorre) falls for a Grand Guignol star (Frances Drake), and grafts the hands of a guillotined knife-thrower (Edward Brophy) onto the wrists of her concert-pianist husband (Colin Clive), and NIGHT MUST FALL (1937), in which an affable Welsh psychopath (affable Robert Montgomery) harbors a severed head in a hatbox. Then there's the strange case of DR. JEKYLL AND MR HYDE (1941), featuring a Freudian nightmare in which the changeable physician (Spencer Tracy), standing atop a hansom cab, whips the two women in his dua. life (Lana Turner and Ingrid Berg man, taking the place of the carriage horses).

A film factory capable of such source story an acknowledged in mention that the latter is "gay with songs."

spiration for Wilde's novel), THE FICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY brought its own brand of flagitious horseplay to bigtown picture palaces and rural bijous.

I sent my soul through the invisible, Some letter of that after-life to spell: And by and by my soul returned to me, And answered, "I myself am Heaven and Hell." The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam

Following the opening credits, the above quotation appears onscreen. The story proper begins in 1886, and therefore must conclude several years into the 20th century. The cynical Lord Henry Wotton arrives, by horse-drawn carriage, at the studio of Basil Hallward (Lowell Gilmore). In the carriage, Lord Henry has been reading the decadent poetry of Charles Baudelaire (a particular favorite of Wilde), Les Fleurs du Mal. The narrator (an uncredited Sir Cedric Hardwicke, perfectly in tune with the material) tells us: "Lord Henry Wotton had set himself early in life to the serious study of the great aristocratic art of doing absolutely nothing. He lived only for pleasure, but his greatest pleasure was to observe the emotions of his friends while experiencing none of his own. He diverted himself by exercising a subtle influence on the lives of others.'

"Professional cad" George Sanders had already made more than three dozen films since 1936, acting for Alfred Hitchcock in REBECCA and FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT (both 1940) and playing Simon Templar (The Saint) and Gay Lawrence (The Falcon) in two popular mystery series for RKO He had worked under Lewin before, to great acclaim, as the Gauguinesque artist in THE MOON AND SIXPENCE (1942). The star would go on to win a Best Supporting Actor Oscar as Addison DeWitt, a sardonic manipulator not unlike Lord Henry, in Joseph L. Mankiewicz's ALL ABOJT EVE (1950). DeWitt's voiceover introduction, in fact, not only mocks the Bible, but echoes the introduction of Lord Henry: "My name is Addison DeWitt. My native habitat is the theater In it, I toil not. Neither do I spin. I am a critic

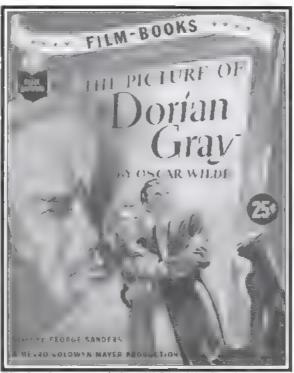
and commentator

Though it isn't his actual profession -he has no profession-Lord Henry is also a critic and commentator, not only of art, but of society and the lives of his friends. He is not, however, without his own appetites. When he walks into Basil's studio and admires his friend's unfinished picture of Dorian Gray, the audience is denied a glimpse of the painting. Instead, from behind the easel, the camera watches the discreetly carnal expression on Henry's face as he absentmindedly lifts his walking stick and strokes the wood. It's a subtle gesture, not grossly phallic as some critics describe it, but unmistakably sexual all the same. Anyone who spots it will understand the nature of Henry's attraction to Dorian. (As we shall see, Basil encourages Dorian's better nature, while Henry pulls Dorian into selfish hedonism, but the same sexual impulse drives both mentors)

Basil plans to give the paintbeauty, including neo-Classical art

and ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Roman artifacts and repli cas. By the time of Wilde's era, gay men already used Greek god imagery as code for same-sex relationships. When Ba sil and Henry retire to the garden to talk about life, love, and Dorian Gray, a bas relief of the face of Pan, hanging on a courtyard wall, sometimes shares the frame with either man. Pan, a Greek nature god adopted by the Romans and other pagans in Europe and Asia, implies both good and evil aspects of power, sexuality, and hedonism. The servant of Dionysius, also known as Bacchus (patron of bacchanalias and dionysian frenzies), Pan was "the author of sudden sexual forays against girls and boys alike . . . Sexually voracious, Pan was also the disappointed suitor. Up in the woods and hills, men still heard Pan's bewitching music . . . " (Robin Lane Fox, Pagans and Christians, Alfred A. Knopf, 1987). The Romans used a Pan ritual to test girls for virginity. The Christians later incorporated Pan (along with Baal and other gods) into their concept of Satan

Basil Hallward is calm, dignified, and morally impeccable, but his Appollonian mask hides a Dionysian heart.



gleeful depravity was capable of The back cover of this MGM filmbook adaptaing to Dorian rather than sell it, most anything, and, within a few years of DR JEKYLL AND MR incongruously trampets the studio's family musinto it." No starving artist, Basil HYDE (its Robert Louis Stevenson cal MEET IN ST. LOUIS (1944), but does at least lives surrounded by luxury and



Superficially, Basil seems nothing like Pan, but displays the god in his garden. Basil disapproves of Henry's self-indulgence and says he'd rather that his friend not meet and corrupt Dorian, but does nothing to drive Henry away Basil criticizes Donan later for his Bacchanalian excesses, but the sensuous, magical portrait, which arouses such interest in Henry and inspires Dorian's narcissistic downfall, results from Basil's brush strokes

During the conversation with Henry, before Dorian arrives at the studio Basil sketches a statuette of the goddess. Bast, as a seated cat. For the ancient Egyptians, Bast (or Mut) represented motherhood and fertility, and also the destructive power of the sun-a masculine symbol. The Greeks and Romans, who freely adapted foreign beliefs to their own religions, spread the Egyptian lore of the cat through European paganism. During the period when Christians demonized the old gods, the cat came to represent lust, vanity, astral travel, occur knowledge, and pure eval-hence her value as a witch s tamiliar. Albert Lewin incorporates elements of all these implications of Bast into the role played by the statuette in THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY, but there is more to this feline than perhaps even

Ancient Egyptian artists often represented Bast as a woman with a cat's head. According to George Rawlinson. in History of Ancient Egypt (Dodd, Mead & Co. 1882), "She bears on her head the sun's disk with the uraeus, but sometimes she has the disk only, sometimes the uracus only, and occasionally neither the one nor the other "

The uraeus is the sacred snake on the Egyptian royal crown. The art of nearly all human cultures, since the earliest cave paintings, has depicted the snake as a phallic sym bol The uracus suggests a common colloquial connection (though based or false etymology) with the word, "Ura nian." Before Oscar Wilde's time, every English noun for a gay man was insulting. The word "gay" still referred to male prostitutes and had barely begun to evolve toward its modern meaning "Homosexual" had only derogatory connotations, because Richard Krafft-Ebing had coined the word in 1886 as a medical term to mean a mentally ill pervert, in Psychopathia Sexualis Barbara Belford writes in Oscar Wilde A Certain Genius (Random House 2000), "The term uranism, or Uranismus in German, originated in the 1860s with a Hanoverian lawyer named Karl Heinrich Ulrichs. He beheved that uranism was a congenital abnormal-Ity in which a female soul was encased in a male body. which he called an Urning In England, poets who wrote about same-sex passion called themselves Uramans." (Presumably, Ulrichs made a tidy profit with his theory, and put all his Urnings in the bank I

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The sound of Dorian playing the plano interrupts the conversation in the garden where Pan presides. From the beginning, the film's outstanding musical score not only creates atmosphere, but comments on the action. (Both musical and visual symbolism are used throughout to reinforce Lewin's screenplay ) Herbert Stothart wrote most of the score, but Mario Castelnuevo-Tadesco, who had fled Mussolini's Italy, contributed without credit. For the melody of his original theme, Stothart wrote a waltz that blends variations on two radically different pieces, a sentimental musichall song, "The Little Yellow Bird," by C. W. Murphy and William Hargreaves, with Frederic Chopin's menacing piano Prelude in D Minor, Op 28, No. 24. Stothart also uses both the song and the Prelude as originally written, along with Beethoven's piano Sonata No. 14 in C sharp minor (inaptly nicknamed "The Moonlight Sonata"), Robert Schumann's "Waldszenen" Op 82 ("Woodland Pieces"), the op era DON GIOVANNI, by Mozart, Chopin's piano Prelude in E minor, Op. 28, No. 4 (nearly every critic of THE PIC-TURE OF DORIAN GRAY identifies the Preludes incorrectly), and snippets of Wagnerian operas and other music.

Once inside, Basil reluctantly introduces Henry to Dorian. Hurd Hatfield, in only his second movie, certainly doesn't match Oscar Wilde's physical description of Dorian. Still, he captures the essence of the character-not just the idea of youth and male beauty but the air of graceful but somewhat self-conscious innocence, with a fragile self-esteem easily perverted into narcissism

Like the portrait for Dorian, the role proved something of a curse for Hatfield. "In a manner of speaking," the actor remembered, "I have been haunted by THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY, New York, London, anywhere the picture is showing, anywhere I'm making a personal appearance, people will talk about other things but they always get back to DORIAN GRAY. One friend told me it's a good thing I didn't make DRACULA and have my entire professional life dominated by that!" (Forties Film Talk, Doug McClelland, McFarland, 1992)

While Dorian poses prettily for Basil, Henry uses his top hat to trap a butterfly Dispassionately, Henry watches the butterfly (a mechanical prop) flutter in its death throes,

Hey, Gang! It's another great Scarlet Street exclusive: THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY flipbook. Just turn to page 63 (where you'll find a photo of dancer Dennis Wayne before Dorian hit the skids) and flip back to this page (which shows Dennis after Dorian's sins have begun to catch up with him). The photograph was taken and doctored by actor/photographer Cris Alexander (Chip in the 1944 original Broadway production of ON THE TOWN) and used onstage in the Joffrey Ballet's DOUBLE EXPOSURE (1972), based on Oscar Wilde's novel.

as he speaks in witty epigrams and counsels Dorian on the in full flower, he says that if virtues of selfishness and cynicism. Much of this delightful dialogue quotes the novel or Wilde's other writings. By the end of the session, Henry has pinned his butterfly to a card He s also captivated Dorian The symbolism is obvious, but

no less effective for the fact

Lewin makes the audience wait to see the doppelganger picture until Basil has finished it. The film has been lensed entirely in black-and-white to this point, but now the picture (Henrique Medina painted this "before the fall" ver sion) appears in brilliant Technicolor against deep green walls with a red upholstered chair in the background. Dorian wears blue trousers and a black coat with a red carnation in the buttorshole. On a table near Dorian stands the statuette of Bast. In color, the painted man and cat both

Dorian stares at the painting with transparent emotion, falling in love with his own image. He muses, "As I grow old, this picture will remain always young If it were only the other way if it were I who was always to be young, and the picture that was to grow old." In an arch tone, but with a slight edge in his voice to hint that he's actually serious, Henry warns, "You oughtn t to express such an idea in the presence of that cat, Doman. It's one of the 73 great gods of gypt, and it's quite capable of granting your wish." (ALL ABOUT EVE's Addison DeWitt might just as well be warning Eve Harrington of the perils of stardom.) Dorian, barely

the picture instead of he could change, "Yes, there's nothing in the world I would not give I'd give even my soul for that" The camera focuses o the Bast statuette as Stothart's weird orchestration of the Chopin Prelude in D minor builds to a crescendo- sue gesting that something some where has accepted Dorian's

Ever helpful, Henry decides that Basil should give Dorian the Bast statuette along with the picture. From then on the pagan goddess appears often as a symbol of the doppelganger magic created by the unholy trinity of Basil's paint ng Doman's wish, and Henry's evocation of the power of

the goddess to grant it

l ord Henry can't see anything good without wanting to pervert it. He begins the work of corrupting Dorian by encouraging him to go slumming, John Bonar, Cedric Gibbons, Hugh Hunt, Hans Peters, and Edwin B. Willis, who shared an Oscar nomination for Best Art Direction and Interior Decoration (Black and White) must have had fun stuffing The Two Turtles, a cheap cabaret, full of macabre imagery A sign on the door reads, "Eat, drink and be listening, goes on daydreaming of eternal youth Narcissism merry." (The audience can fill in " . . . for tomorrow you

OPPOSITE PAGE Known for its family values, MGM had a kinkier side. When Spencer Tracy underwent his transformation in DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE (1941), he imagined a Freudian whirlpool in which he whipped white horses, which were suddenly replaced by Ingrid Bergman and Lana Turner (pictured in this frame blowup), BOT-TOM LEFT Lord Carfax (John Fraser) is questioned by Sherlock Holmes (John Neville) in A STUDY IN TERROR (1965), as Sally (Judi Dench) watches apprehensively Both Fraser and Neville played Oscar Wilde's lover, Lord Alfred Douglay, in competing biopics in 1960. In 1961, Fraser also played Wilde's famous hedonist in David Susskind's televersion of THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY







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TURE OF DORIAN GRAY identifies the Preludes incor-

Like the portrait for Dorian, the role proved something of a curse for Hatfield. "In a manner of speaking," the actor remembered, "I have been haunted by THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY. New York, London, anywhere the picture is showing, anywhere I'm making a personal appearance, people will talk about other things but they always get back to DORIAN GRAY. One friend told me it's a good thing I didn't make DRACULA and have my entire professional life dominated by that!" (Forties Film Talk, Doug McClelland, McFarland, 1992)

While Dorian poses prettily for Basil, Henry uses his top hat to trap a butterfly. Dispassionately, Henry watches the butterfly (a mechanical prop) flutter in its death throes, Hey, Gang! It's another great Scarlet Street exclusive: THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY flipbook. Just turn to page 63 (where you'll find a photo of dancer Dennis Wayne before Dorian hit the skids) and flip back to this page (which shows Dennis after Dorian's sins have begun to catch up with him). The photograph was taken and doctored by actor/photographer Cris Alexander (Chip in the 1944 original Broadway production of ON THE TOWN) and used onstage in the Joffrey Ballet's DOUBLE EXPOSURE (1972), based on Oscar Wilde's novel.

as he speaks in witty epigrams and counsels Dorian on the virtues of selfishness and cynicism. Much of this delightful dialogue quotes the novel or Wilde's other writings. By the end of the session, Henry has pinned his butterfly to a card. He's also captivated Dorian. The symbolism is obvious, but no less effective for the fact.

Lewin makes the audience wait to see the doppelganger picture until Basil has finished it. The film has been lensed entirely in black and-white to this point, but now the picture (Henrique Medina painted this "before the fall" version) appears in brilliant Technicolor: against deep green walls with a red upholstered chair in the background, Dorian wears blue trousers and a black coat with a red carnation in the buttonhole. On a table near Dorian stands the statuette of Bast. In color, the painted man and cat both look alive.

Dorian stares at the painting with transparent emotion, falling in love with his own image. He muses, "As I grow old, this picture will remain always young. If it were only the other way—if it were I who was always to be young, and the picture that was to grow old." In an arch tone, but with a slight edge in his voice to hint that he's actually serious, Henry warns, "You oughtn't to express such an idea in the presence of that cat, Dorian. It's one of the 73 great gods of Egypt, and it's quite capable of granting your wish." (ALL ABOUT EVE's Addison DeWitt might just as well be warning Eve Harrington of the perils of stardom.) Dorian, barely listening, goes on daydreaming of eternal youth. Narcissism

in full flower, he says that if the picture instead of he could change, "Yes, there's nothing in the world I would not give. I'd give even my soul for that." The camera focuses on the Bast statuette as Stothart's weird orchestration of the Chopin Prelude in D minor builds to a crescendo—suggesting that something somewhere has accepted Dorian's bargain.

Ever helpful, Henry decides that Basil should give Dorian the Bast statuette along with the picture. From then on, the pagan goddess appears often as a symbol of the doppel-ganger magic created by the unholy trinity of Basil's painting, Dorian's wish, and Henry's evocation of the power of

the goddess to grant it.

Lord Henry can't see anything good without wanting to pervert it. He begins the work of corrupting Dorian by encouraging him to go slumming. John Bonar, Cedric Gibbons, Hugh Hunt, Hans Peters, and Edwin B. Willis, who shared an Oscar nomination for Best Art Direction and Interior Decoration (Black and White) must have had fun stuffing The Two Turtles, a cheap cabaret, full of macabre imagery. A sign on the door reads, "Eat, drink and be merry" (The audience can fill in "... for tomorrow you

OPPOSITE PAGE Known for its family values MGM had a kinkler side. When Spencer Tracy underwent his transformation in DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE (1941), he imagined a Freudian whirlpool in which he whipped white horses—which were suddenly replaced by Ingrid Bergman and Lana Turner (pictured in this frame blowup) BOTTOM LEFT: Lord Carfax (John Fraser) is questioned by Sherlock Holmes (John Neville) in A STUDY IN TERROR (1965), as Sally (Judi Dench) watches apprehensively Both Fraser and Neville played Oscar Wilde's lover, Lord Alfred Douglas, in competing biopics in 1960. In 1961, Fraser also played Wilde's famous hedonist in David Susskind's televersion of THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY.





SCARLET STREET





LEFT. Albert Lewin turned Wilde's Shakespearean actress into a music hall singer when he cast Angela Lansbury as Sybil Vane for the 1945 film. Here, Malvoho Jones (Billy Bevan) presents Sybil to Dorian (Hurd Hatfield). RIGHT: In this 1963 stage product on, Lady Wolton (Rick) O shani has her hand kissed by Dorian (T | Escott) as Lord Henry Wotton (Jay Robinson), more interested in the young man than his wife, watches with smug superiority.

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Martin Gottleib quotes the actress in Balancing Act The Authorized Biography of Angela Lansbury Little, Brown, 1999). "I really can't take credit for that performance. I have to credit Albert Lewin, and the cinematographer, the music, the role, and the art direction I was framed in the most perfect way and I would like to be remembered for that part." Gottleib continues. "... Sybil Vane is a straight-forward part, offering few of the shadings that had been possible with GASLIGHT's Nancy. Nor was there a mentor like George Cukor behind the camera, encouraging her to dig deeply into the character that she was playing. And so she made THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY 'lund of walking through it in a daze " Since the performance is so very suc-

LEFF. He may be responsible for a rash of suicides, a killing, a blackmail scheme or two, but in the 1945 MGM film Dorian Gray is at least a gentleman, helping Gladys (Donna Reed), the niece of the murdered Basil Hallward, on with her necklace. RIGHT: It's the mod influence, perhaps, but in 1970 Dorian's idea of gentlemanly behavior is to close the stable door, lift the skirts of Patricia Ruxton (Isa Miranda), and do the duty from the rear As Dorian, Helmut Berger is obviously behind everything but the times.





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Lansbury has never forgotten THE PICTURE OF DORtAN GRAY Hurd Hatfield was a guest on her TV series MURDER SHE WROTE, and the second-season episode "Sing a Song of Murder" featured Lansbury in a dual roleas Jessica Fletcher, of course and as her British actress cousin. Emma MacGill (Lansbury's mother, Moyna MacGill, plays a duchess in DORIAN GRAY) As Emma, Lansbury sang "The Little Yellow Bird." (Later in the run, the character returned and Lansbury warbled Jerome Kern's "How'd You Like to Spoon with Me?," which she had performed in the 1946 MGM musical TILL THE CLOUDS ROLL BY )

Despite the tawdry environment, Sybil muffles her innate sensuality under Victorian "nice girl" decorum. "The Little Yellow Bird" becomes the movie's theme song for victimization. The ditty tells of a wild sparrow, poor but proud (Sybil, naturally), attracted to a handsome yellow bird sing ing in a gilded cage (Dorian) Rather than join kim in his luxurious prison, she decides to fly away alone, into the cold winter She risks her life for freedom, by rejecting the fancy attle songbird

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After hours, Doman impresses Sybil and stirs her passions by playing the stormy Chopin Prelude in D Minor on the piano in the Two Turtles. Sybil's obsessively protective brother, James (Richard Fraser), finds this music morbidly disturbing and takes an instant dislike to the musician, though he's not even close enough to see his face. Giving Sybil a suggestive look, Dorian tells her that the music is called "Prelude," just before he kisses her for the first time She thinks it's a Prelude to Happily Ever After, but those familiar with the plot of Wilde's novel know it's really a prelude to tragedy

Doman claims Chopin wrote the Prelude for George Sand and that Chopin was unhappy, "perhaps because he felt his youth slipping away from him." That's a fanciful speculation, though Chopin did start the affair with George Sand in 1831, the year he wrote this Prelude. A former child prodigy pianist, Chopin died at age 39. His life span was similar to Doman Gray's and he wrote the first draft of the Prelude at about the age of Dorian when Sybil first hears him play it. It's possible to make too much of such parallels Dorian obviously isn't meant to be a reincamation of Chopin!-but it's worth noting that Chopin, when he died, also looked young for his age

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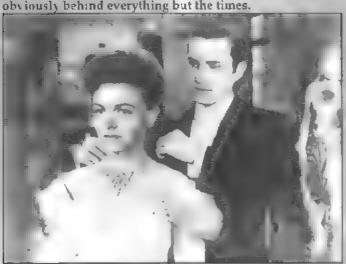
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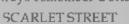
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LEFT: Lord Henry (Nigel Davenport) tells a drowsy Dorian Shane Briant) of Sybil Vane's suicide in the 1973 Dan Curtis TV production. It is nowhere suggested that Sybil killed herself after seeing Dorian in his lace nightle. RIGHT: Perhaps Helmut Berger spent so much of the "modern dress" DORIAN GRAY (1970) buck naked because he'd otherwise have had to wear clothes like this!

room and her own happiness. Then the clock strikes, time sees Bast's eyes move in a reflection in the mirror Dorian reads her some lines about cats that awaken bestial senses, from an Oscar Wilde poem, "The Sphinx " When Dorian asks Sybil to stay, his disregard for her virtue sends a tear rolling down her cheek. She stares at him reproachfully, then starts to leave. "I suppose I should have expected a conventional reaction," he says contemptuously Sybil walks out her shadow faintly visible on the polished floor both behind and ahead of her Dorian smiles enigmatically then heads for the piano

Seemingly it is the Chopin Prelude that lures Sybilfor all good girls to go home Ominously, Sybil thinks she back. Though the lighting hasn't changed in the few moments since her departure, now her shadow looms long and black as it precedes her into the room. An orchestrated version of the Presude accompanies this film noir moment Trumpets join the tolling bell effect of the last three notes, with a clock visible in the background. (The temptation to find symbolic meaning-shadow of death, tolling of funeral bells, time running out, trumpet call of judgment-is irresistible ) Both Sybil and Dorian seal their fate with their actions in this scene. Neither ever succeeds in reversing the fall to damnation.

LEFT; Having already played Dorian Gray in a 1960 British televersion, Jeremy Brett moved on to the role of doomed artist Basil Hallward for the 1976 production starring Peter Firth. RIGHT: In the 1970 theatrical feature, the portrait of Dorian painted by Basil (Richard Todd) is the stuff of gay porn, its subject already looking like a street hustler before he luses himself to the sins of the flesh.





The next morning, Doman sends Sybil a nasty note of hind Basil while he's praying rejection, saying he will never see her again-because she disappointed him by letting him seduce her! He encloses money, as if he were paying off a tart. As Sybil reads the letter in stunned dismay, the tinkling music for the prancing music-hall marionettes takes over from the orchestration. of Chopin on the soundtrack. Dorian has used Sybil as his plaything, his puppet. When Dorian returns home to his time house in Mayinis, after a night of debauchery, nearly every camera angle keeps Bast in the frame as he scrutinizes the portrait (not in color in this scene). An expression of crucity has appeared around the mouth, along with a cynical loft to the evebrow "Was this portrait to become the emblem of his conscience?" the narrator asks. "Would t teach him to loathe his own soul?" Dorian decides he'd better reform, and live a pure and noble life. He feels forgiven as he works on writing a letter of applogy to Sybil, but then Henry arrives with the news that Sybil has emulated Isolde changingly, at the death of its by swallowing poison. Sybil's poison was no Love Potion creator. The wooden framing Number Nine in disguise 5he died instantly (The orchestra gives out a big, brassy "tah dah!" here, as the news shocks Durian It's crude, compared to the previous music ) Henry invites Dorian to dine with him and attend the opera DON GIOVANNI Henry assures Dorian that Sybil would have made him miserable anyway, since she must have been mentally unbalanced. Besides, a woman has killed herself

Dorian's grief over Sybil doesn't last long enough to keep him home from the opera. Yet another musical echo: the opera's composer, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, was another genius who died prematurely, at age 35. The evil Don Giovanni is Don Juan, a serial ruiner of men and women, a rapist and a murderer, and another foreshadowing of Dorran's direction in life. At the end of the opera, the Devil leaps up from a flaming pit (a trapdoor in the stage), and drags Don Giovanni down to Hell, always a crowd-pleasing

for Dorian and, by Henry's standards, that's flattering!

After the opera, Dorian, not one to brood these days. happily whistles "La ci darem la mano," a love song from DON GIOVANNI The narrator explains how, after Sybil's suicide, Dorian remained "unspotted from the world" despite his growing evil reputation. People whisper about him. and some shun him. Brief scenes hint at drug dens and haisons with prostitutes. The narrator says, "When he had recovered from these visits to the abyss, he would stand in front of the picture, sometimes loothing it and himself, but filled at other times with that pride of individualism that is half the fascination of evil." Dorian in the flesh stays young, handsome, and innocent of appearance, while the portrait not only ages in his place, but absorbs and displays the putrefaction of his soul

Sometimes, for scenes set in the attic classroom of Dorian's boyhood, where he hides the tatal picture once it starts to deteriorate, Stothart orchestrates snippets of Chopin's Opus 28, No. 4, the E minor Prelude. This Prelude. is wistful, yearning. With its one sharp, it comes early in the series, the minor half of the second step in the circle of fifths But Dorian as an adult doesn't live in the E m nor of childhood yearnings any more and he never plays that piece on the piano. He's stuck in D minor

Years pass Basil Hallward, preparing to go abroad confronts Dorian, warning him of the gossip and counselling him to mend his ways. Dorian blames Basil for his plight and impulsively shows him the portrait as proof Once again, the picture appears in shocking Technicolor, in the revolting, "moral leprosy" version (Painted by Ivan de Lorraine Albright, the work now resides in the Arl Institute of Chicago.) In the background, the window frame forms a white cross

Naturally, Basil at first thinks that Dorian has tampered with his masterpiece, but Dorian says he didn't destroy the painting-"It has destroyed me." Basil begs Dorian to pray with him, but is refused Impulsively, Dorian sneaks up be-

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LEFT: Lord Henry (Nigel Davenport) tells a drowsy Dorian (Shane Briant) of Sybil Vane's suicide in the 1973 Dan Curtis TV production. It is nowhere suggested that Sybil killed herself after seeing Dorian in his lace nightie. RIGHT: Perhaps Helmut Berger spent so much of the "modern dress" DORIAN GRAY (1970) buck naked because he'd otherwise have had to wear clothes like this!

room and her own happ.ness. Then the clock strikes: time for all good girls to go home. Ominously, Sybil thinks she sees Bast's eyes move in a reflection in the mirror. Dorian reads her some lines about cats that awaken bestial senses, from an Oscar Wilde poem, "The Sphinx." When Dorian asks Sybil to stay, his disregard for her virtue sends a tear rolling down her cheek. She stares at him reproachfully, then starts to leave. "I suppose I should have expected a conventional reaction," he says contemptuously. Sybil walks out, her shadow faintly visible on the polished floor both behind and ahead of her. Dorian smiles enigmatically, then heads for the piano.

Seemingly, it is the Chopin Prelude that lures Sybil back. Though the lighting hasn't changed in the few moments since her departure, now her shadow looms long and black as it precedes her into the room. An orchestrated version of the Prelude accompanies this film noir moment Trumpets join the tolling bell effect of the last three notes, with a clock visible in the background (The temptation to find symbolic meaning—shadow of death, tolling of funeral bells, time running out, trumpet call of judgment—is irresistible.) Both Sybil and Dorian seal their fate with their actions in this scene. Neither ever succeeds in reversing the fall to damnation.

LEFT: Having already played Dorian Gray in a 1960 British televersion, Jeremy Brett moved on to the role of doomed artist Basil Hallward for the 1976 production starring Peter Firth. RIGHT: In the 1970 theatrical feature, the portrait of Dorian painted by Basil (Richard Todd) is the stuff of gay porn, its subject already looking like a street hustler before he loses himself to the sins of the flesh.





The next morning, Dorian sends Sybil a nasty note of rejection, saying he will never see her again-because she disappointed him by letting him seduce her! He encloses money, as if he were paying off a tart. As Sybil reads the letter in stunned dismay, the tinkling music for the prancing music-hall marionettes takes over from the orchestration of Chopin on the soundtrack. Dorian has used Sybil as his plaything, his puppet. When Dorian returns home to his fine house in Mayfair, after a night of debauchery, nearly every camera angle keeps Bast in the frame as he scrutinizes the portrait (not in color in this scene). An expression of cruelty has appeared around the mouth, along with a cynical loft to the eyebrow. "Was this portrait to become the emblem of his conscience?" the narrator asks. "Would it teach him to loathe his own soul?" Dorian decides he'd better reform, and live a pure and noble life. He feels forgiven as he works on writing a letter of apology to Sybil, but then Henry arrives with the news that Sybil has emulated Isolde by swallowing poison. Sybil's poison was no Love Potion Number Nine in disguise. She died instantly. (The orchestra gives out a big, brassy "tah dah!" here, as the news shocks Dorian. It's crude, compared to the previous music ) Henry invites Dorian to dine with him and attend the opera DON GIOVANNI Henry assures Dorian that Sybil would have made him miserable anyway, since she must have been mentally unbalanced. Besides, a woman has killed herself for Dorian and, by Henry's standards, that's flattering

Dorian's grief over Sybil doesn't last long enough to keep him home from the opera. Yet another musical echo the opera's composer, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, was another genius who died prematurely, at age 35. The evil Don Giovanni is Don Juan, a serial ruiner of men and women, a rapist and a murderer, and another foreshadowing of Dorian's direction in life. At the end of the opera, the Devil leaps up from a flaming pit (a trapdoor in the stage), and drags Don Giovanni down to Hell, always a crowd-pleasing

After the opera, Dorian, not one to brood these days, happily whistles "La ci darem la mano," a love song from DON GIOVANNI. The narrator explains how, after Sybil's suicide, Dorian remained "unspotted from the world" despite his growing evil reputation. People whisper about him and some shun him Brief scenes hint at drug dens and liaisons with prostitutes. The narrator says, "When he had re-covered from these visits to the abyss, he would stand in front of the picture, sometimes loathing it and himself, but filled at other times with that pride of individualism that is half the fascination of evil." Donan in the flesh stays young, handsome, and innocent of appearance, while the portrait not only ages in his place, but absorbs and displays the putrefaction of his soul.

Sometimes, for scenes set in the attic classroom of Dorian's boyhood, where he hides the fatal picture once it starts to deteriorate, Stothart orchestrates snippets of Chopin's Opus 28, No. 4, the E minor Prelude. This Prelude is wistful, yearning. With its one sharp, it comes early in the series, the minor half of the second step in the circle of fifths. But Dorian as an adult doesn't live in the E minor of childhood yearnings any more and he never plays that piece on the piano. He's stuck in D minor.

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The portrait (again in black-and-white) looks on impassively, if not entirely unchangingly, at the death of its creator. The wooden framing on the closed door of the nursery forms another large, white sign of the cross. Dorian's face remains blank, im-

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David Peel achieved film immortality BRIDES OF DRACULA (1960), and remains comething of a mystery himself. So little is known about the man that each new tidbit of information—that he acted with BRIDES costar Peter Cush-ing in a 1984 television production of the Anatole de Grunwald classic BEAU BRUMMELL, that he appeared opposite J. Carral Naish in an uploade of the syndicated TV senies THE NEW ADVENTURES OF CHARLIE CHAN (1987)—adhleves a significance all out of proposition to its importance. However, it was a matter of con-

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-Continued on page 71

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Continued from page 59

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Dorian gets away with Basil Hallward's murder by blackmalling a former friend, Allen Campbell (Douglas Walton), into disposing of the corpse. Allen then commits suicide By now, the Dorian of the painting has blood on

his clawed bestial hands When Basil's ward, Gladys (Donna Reed), moves into his studio while settling his estate, she begins a romance with Dorian, but he dumps her-to protect her, he tells himself By this time, viewers might wonder what Dorian's hiding from himself, since in 20 years, he's never established a lasting relationship with a woman. He's crammed his country home with horned masks and horned game tro phies, along with artistic depictions of horns, swords, spears, and other obvious phallic imagery. He also collects classical and neoclassical art with homoerotic implications During a conversation with Gladys, a mirror reflects a reproduction of a nude, bronze "David" by the fifteenth century Italian artist, Verrocchio. There's another Italian nude, a copy of "David," by Donatello, in the gentlemen's club Dorian frequents. (The young rival for Gladys' affections, played by Peter Lawford, is also a David-David Stone-

In a reversal of his original wish, Dorian confesses to Henry, "Sometimes I think I d give anything if I could change and grow old like other people." Instead, it a Dorian's unchanging continence that temporarily saves his life when, almost 20 years after Sybil Vane's death, brother lames returns seeking vengeance

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Dorian and lames cross paths in a disreputable dive, a Victorian piano bar conveniently equipped with a drug denand whores. There, another young man whose life has been ruined by Dorian, Adrian Singleton (Morton Lowry), calls his former friend Sir Tristan within earshot of James, who follows his sister's seducer into the streets "Sir Tristan" tricks his attacker into sparing him by the simple expedient of drawing attention to his face-he's obviously far too young to have seduced and abandoned Sybil some two decades previously. Soon enough, James learns his mistake and stalks Dorian to a hunting party on the grounds of the Gray country estate, where a guest accidentally shoots and

kills the unlucky sailor

Sick with remorse over the long parade of deaths, frightened by the degeneration of his soul as chronicled in the painting. Dorlan decides to reform. For a tangible affirmation of this decision, he stabs the vile portrait through the heart From the camera position behind the easel, the viewer sees the letter knife rip through the canvas-but then Dorian staggers back. His head hits the lamp which begins swinging again, as it did when Basil died. The double shadow of the lamp falls on the portrait (in black and white for this scene), a double shadow on a doppelganger as it begins to blur and change. Doman's voice babbles, praying for forgiveness (in a scene sometimes cut from early prints of the movie). As he dies, Dorian swiftly degenerates to show all his age and corruption, while the picture changes back to the handsome original, though still minus color Lord Henry, Gladys, and David arrive to find Dorian's rotted corpse lying on the nursery floor "May God forgive me," murmurs Lord Henry—he knows his culpability in the rumation and death of this once promising young man. The film's last shot is of the Bast statuette, in Dorian's

study downstairs, with a book open to Omar Khavvam's poem propped against it

Albert Lewin's THE PIC TURE OF DORIAN GRAY re ceived mixed reviews, including a cleverly written slam from James Agee, who seems to have misunderstood or disagreed with just about every thing Lewin tried to accomplish Agee called the movie respectful, earnest, and, I am afraid, dead" and "just a cultural horror picture, decorated with epigrams and and abo And water rate mora. Lewin had forgone tax u m nuendo when he "could bus put the audience through the whole thesaurus of evil and scared them stiff into the bar gain," (The Nation, March 10 1945.) Agee wished Lewin had



rebelled against the prudishness of his era's film industry Bring on the blood and thunder. To hell with the censors. Agee's opinion was controversial even in his own day, when THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY won Albert Lewin the 1946 Venice Film Festival Award for Fums Presented. The movie also received a 1946 Hugo Award for Best Dramatic Presentation. Time has requirenated this PICTURE. With the Hays Office long detunct, today's audience, drenched in explicit gore and sex, can appreciate Lewin's subtlety again

"It is better to be beautiful than to be good, but it is better to be good than to be ugly "

Decades before his definitive portrayal of Sherlock Holmes on the small screen, Jeremy Brett played Sherlock's Victorian contemporary in a January 1961 BBC presentation of ARMCHAIR THEATRE Brett's Interpretation of Dorian Gray resulted in his being named the Daily Mirror's Most Promising Actor on TV. Dennis Price costarred as Lord Henry Wotton.

An unsigned and decidedly unappreciative review in The London Times (January 23, 1961) reads: "Stripped down to its actual wickedness, with no bint of any sort of perversion in Dorian Gray's career, one begins to wonder at the author's sense of evil Wilde's work gains vastly from his own story; he is Dorian Gray, of the unnamoable vices, and he is Lord Henry Wotton, the brilliantly witty corruptor of youth, just as he is the insufficiently great creator of the tell tale portrait, but the odd things are the equation of he donism with self-fulfillment and of self-fulfillment with the ult mate in wickedness

"Naturally, not only the story's nastier implications had to be jettisoned, Lord Henry ceased to be an epigrammatist at the end of Act One, but by that time Mr. Dennis Price had delivered several of his finer flights of wit with the de-Liberate stylishness that they demand. One felt his influence gradually stealing over Mr. Jeremy Brett, whose Dorian became less prone to flick away his lines with modern offhandedness as the play proceeded '

In 1976, Jeremy Brett returned to the Oscar Wilde story for another BBC presentation, but, unluckier than Doman in halting the ravages of time, the still handsome actor played Basil Hallward while relinquishing the lead to 23-year-old Peter Firth (then still riding a wave of popularity as the fre-quently nude star of Peter Shaffer's 1974 stage play EQLUS. iself a drama with a considerable gay subtext) When



## by Richard Valley

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swimming together, at the public pool. It was the Serpentine, which was the swimming pool in Hyde Park. That's also where I first met Sean Connery, before he even thought he was going to be an actor."

Dean had fond memories of Feel and the dramatization, though the date of its recording cluded him. "Well, I came to America in 1954, so it must have been before that. I worked for a marvelous producer in England, an old guy called Howard Rose. Howard used to do all the BBC broadcasts, but he also had a contract to do some recordings for what was then called His Master's Voice label, which here in America is Columbia. I did JULIUS CAESAR and THE PICTURE DE DORIAN CRA and some other recordings for him. David Feel was doing Dorian Gray. I played the friend of Dorian, Lord Honry Wotton. It wasn't broadcast on radio; it was just done as a record.

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Dorian and James cross paths in a disreputable dive, a Victorian piano bar conveniently equipped with a drug den and whores. There, another young man whose life has been ruined by Dorian, Adrian Singleton (Morton Lowry), calls his former friend Sir Tristan within earshot of James, who follows his sister's seducer into the streets. "Sir Tristan" tricks his attacker into sparing him by the simple expedient of drawing attention to his face he's obviously far too young to have seduced and abandoned Sybil some two decades previously. Soon enough, James learns his mistake and stalks Dorian to a hunting party on the grounds of the Gray country estate, where a guest accidentally shoots and

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Sick with remorse over the long parade of deaths, frightened by the degeneration of his soul as chronicled in the painting, Dorian decides to reform. For a tangible affirmation of this decision, he stabs the vile portrait through the heart. From the camera position behind the easel, the viewer sees the letter knife rip through the canvas-but then Dorian staggers back. His head hits the lamp, which begins swinging again, as it did when Basil died. The double shadow of the lamp falls on the portrait (in blackand-white for this scene), a double shadow on a doppelganger as it begins to blur and change Dorian's voice bab-bles, praying for forgiveness (in a scene sometimes cut from early prints of the movie). As he dies, Dorian swiftly degenerates to show all his age and corruption, while the picture changes back to the handsome original, though still minus color. Lord Henry, Gladys, and David arrive to find Dorian's rotted corpse lying on the nursery floor. "May God forgive me," murmurs Lord Henry-he knows his culpability in the rumation and death of this once-promising young man. The film's last shot is of the Bast statuette, in Donan's

study downstairs, with a book open to Omar Khayyam's po-em propped against it.

Albert Lewin's THE PIC-TURE OF DORIAN GRAY recerved mixed reviews, including a cleverly written slam from James Agee, who seems to have misunderstood or disagreed with just about everything Lewin tried to accomplish. Agee called the movie 'respectful, earnest, and, I am afraid, dead" and "just a cultural horror picture, decorated with epigrams and an elaborate moral . . . . " Agee wished Lewin had forgone tasteful innuendo when he "could have put the audience through the whole thesaurus of evil, and scared them stiff into the bargain." (The Nation, March 10, 1945.) Agee wished Lewin had



rebelled against the prudishness of his era's film industry Bring on the blood and thunder! To hell with the censors! Agee's opinion was controversial even in his own day, when THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY won Albert Lewin the 1946 Venice Film Festival Award for Films Presented The movie also received a 1946 Hugo Award for Best Dramatic Presentation. Time has rejuvenated this PICTURE With the Hays Office long defunct, today's audience, drenched in explicit gore and sex, can appreciate Lewin's subtlety again

"It is better to be beautiful than to be good, but it is better to be good than to be ugly."

-Oscar Wilde

Decades before his definitive portrayal of Sherlock Holmes on the small screen, Jeremy Brett played Sherlock's Victorian contemporary in a January 1961 BBC presentation of ARMCHAIR THEATRE Brett's interpretation of Dorian Gray resulted in his being named the Daily Mirror's Most Promising Actor on TV. Dennis Price costarred as Lord

Henry Wotton.

An unsigned and decidedly unappreciative review in The London Times (January 23, 1961) reads: "Stripped down to its actual wickedness, with no hint of any sort of perversion in Dorian Gray's career, one begins to wonder at the author's sense of evil Wilde's work gains vastly from his own story; he is Dorian Gray, of the unnameable vices, and he is Lord Henry Wotton, the brilliantly witty corruptor of youth, just as he is the insufficiently great creator of the tell-tale portrait, but the odd things are the equation of hedonism with self-fulfillment and of self fulfillment with the u.hmate in wickedness

'Naturally, not only the story's nastier implications had to be jettisoned; Lord Henry ceased to be an epigrammatist at the end of Act One, but by that time Mr Dennis Price had delivered several of his finer flights of wit with the deliberate stylishness that they demand. One felt his influence gradually stealing over Mr. Jeremy Brett, whose Dorian became less prone to flick away his lines with modern off-

handedness as the play proceeded."

In 1976, Jeremy Brett returned to the Oscar Wilde story for another BBC presentation, but, unluckier than Dorian in halting the ravages of time, the still handsome actor played Basil Hallward while relinquishing the lead to 23-year-old Peter Firth (then still riding a wave of popularity as the frequently nude star of Peter Shaffer's 1974 stage play EQUUS, itself a drama with a considerable gay subtext). When

# Dennie Wayne Dances Derie

n 1972, The Picture of Dorian Gray underwent another startling transformation—it became The Photograph of Dorian Gray, when New York's Juffrey Ballet premiered a new work choreographed and directed by Joe Layton—DOUBLE EXPOSURE. Layton had made his name in musical theater with such shows as TENDERLOIN (1960), GEORGE M (1968), and DEAR WORLD (1969), before deciding to tackle ballet.

The photograph—one original and four copies, air-brushed through four progressively grim transformationswas the work of actor/photographer Cris Alexander, himself well known to theater buffs for his roles in the origi-nal productions of ON THE TOWN

Interview by Jessie Lilley. (1944, in which he played Chip, the part taken by Frank Sinatra in the 1949 film) and WONDERFUL TOWN (1953). The photographs were mounted in a piexl-glass cube, which was periodically shifted from one picture to the mext to show the deterioration of its subject. After Dark, the semicloseted precursor

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### Interview by Jessie Lilley Text by Bichard Valley

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LEFT AND RIGHT: The sexual revolution of the late sixties and early seventies allowed DORIAN GRAY director Massimano Dallamano to show what Oscar Wilde's novel and earlier film versions only hinted at — if they hinted at anything at all! Dorian (Helmut Berger) bedded Sybil Vane (Marie Liljedahl) in one of the film's frequent nude scenes, and the relationship between Dorian and Lord Henry Wotton (Herbert Lom) was overtly sexual. In his Scarlet Street interview last issue, Berger claimed he had to tone down some of Dallamano's more outre suggestions. BOTTOM LEFT: In the Dan Curtis telefilm, Shane Briant was a Dorian rarity—a genuine blonde!

"To be good, according to the vulgar standards of goodness, is obviously quite easy. It merely requires a certain amount of sordid terror, a certain lack of imaginative thought and a certain low passion for middle-class respectability"

-Oscar Wilde

In August, 1970, Commonwealth United Entertainment (distributed by AIP) released THE SECRET OF DORIAN GRAY, subt.tled, "A modern allegory based on the work of Oscar Wilde." The campy, revisionist approach loosely follows the outline of Wilde's plot, but updates it to end in the last year of the Swingin' Sixties. The dialogue is looped, not very smoothly. It's obvious that some of the actors—including Holmut Berney, the say object start, den's most than



produced. Though hardly a forgotten masterpiece, THE SE-CRET OF DORIAN GRAY (also known simply as DORIAN GRAY) deserves another look.

The movie begins with a closeup from the point of view of Dorian (Berger) as he washes his bloodied hands at a sink. "Spooky" music plays. In the mirror, the handsome young face looks haggard and guilt-stricken. Dorian lives in a tine old house, updated with modern conveniences. A broken vase lies on the floor in an upstairs room, where a black cat (the color of evil and bad luck, probably in deliberate homage to the statuette of Bast in the 1945 movie) watches Dorian tidy up. The fire in his fireplace dissolves to a long flashback sequence that continues nearly to the end of the movie.

THE SECRET hints at Dorian's secret right away, when he and two male friends go to a gay cabaret late at night. The three watch disapproving, y as a black female impersonator, Beau, performs a campy dance on top of the bar. Beau wears a bizarre dress, decorated al. over with metallic tinsel foil fringe that resembles Christmas tree "icicles." Most of the patrons laugh and enjoy themselves, as Beau strips to a black bra and panties, then strips off the bra to much applause. Beau's starting to peel off the panties when Dorian and his two companions, too conventional for this sort of entertainment, walk out grimly

At this point, Dorian seems pleasant enough-vapid and stupid, to be sure, but nothing worse. Alone, he stops on impulse at a Shakespearean theater, where he sees an ad for RÔMEO AND JULIET, with Sybil Vane (Marie Liljedahl) as Juliet. Dark-haired Sybil looks young and vulnerable as she rehearses with a tape recorder, two days before her opening night. (The looped dialogue looks most obvious in this scene, since it's apparent that Marie Liljedahl doesn't speak her lines in English-a decided disadvantage for someone rehearsing Shakespeare ) The two get acquainted, wander around romantic London by night, eat supper together, and end up in Dorian's bed A tape of ROMFO AND JULIET plays as they make love (To Dorian's surprise, Sybil is a virgin ) Next morning, as Dorian kisses her goodbye at her apartment building in a lower middle class neighborhood, where she lives with her mother, a man watches them from a window

Henry Wotton (Herbert Lom), a snooty art dealer, and his predatory bitch of a sister, Gwendolyn (Margaret Lee), meet Dorian for the first time when they visit Basil Hallward's pleasant seaside studio. Dorian poses shirtless, with



LEFT: Stage versions of THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY continue to proliferate right into the 21st Century. The recent Irish Repertory Theatre starred Crispin Freeman as a decidedly bisexual Dorian. RIGHT: Makeup master Dick Smith created this dummy Dorian for the conclusion of the 1961 David Susskind TV production.

a long, blue scarf draped around his neck. Wearing blue jeans with a wide leather belt, he looks innocent and carefree, clowning around, making silly faces. At the same time, he's dressed like a male hooker. Basil (Richard Todd) certainly captures none of the innocence and all of the smol-

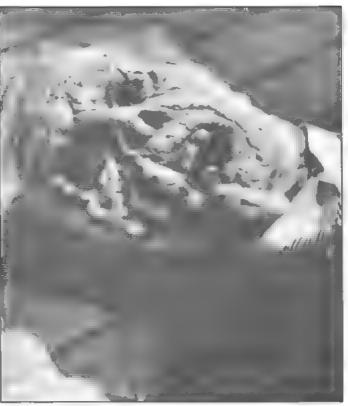
dering sex on his canvas.

Henry counsels Dorian in the virtues of hedonism "What is vice, anyway? Simply pleasure without shame." Later, Gwendolyn—named, perhaps, for the sophisticated city girl of Wilde's THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST—watches Dorian hungrily as he uses Basil's outdoor shower. He's a babe magnet even before he makes his devil's bargain with the portrait. Henry teases Basil about his attraction to Dorian's portrait (by inference, Basil's attraction to Dorian himself). A hint of jealousy surfaces: When Henry can't hide his attraction, he deflects attention by making a big deal of Basil's own obsession. It takes one to know one

Herbert Lom, best known as Chief Inspector Dreyfus in the Pink Panther films and to horror enthusiasts as Hammer's PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (1962), lends depth and complexity to Henry, whose cynicism looks like a self-protective pose. Henry wants to retain his own youth, but he's wise enough to know he can't do that. He falls in love with someone who quickly becomes too coldhearted to love him in return. Also, brains matter to Henry, and Dorian hasn't got any.

Dorian and Sybil drive to the country, where they romp and make love, after which she nudges him for a commitment. He agrees by calling her, "Mrs. Sybil Gray"—an ominous portent, because that would be the proper title for a widow, not a wife. (Formal address for a wife in formality-conscious England should be, "Mrs. Dorian Gray.")

When Basil finally finishes and signs the picture, Dorian, in a harsh tone unlike his usual lighthearted voice, complains, "Why should I get old while this stays young? Why can't it be the other way around?" Basil doesn't take this comment seriously, but Dorian goes on, "I would give my soul to stay like that." When the others realize he means it, even Henry looks worried. Basil is so alarmed that he picks up a knife and threatens to destroy the painting, but Dorian won't let him. Henry buys the picture as a gift for Dorian. After Dorian hangs up the portrait in his home, his narcissism increases and he begins neglecting his friends. His relationship with Sybil fails to hold his attention for much longer. She lives with her mother and her control-



ling, over- protective brother, Jim (Stewart Black) When Jim leaves on a sea voyage scheduled to last a year, Sybil tells Dorian, "I think he'd kill for me" Dorian remarks that the brother and sister act almost like lovers, rendering obvious the subtext of the 1945 film

One night, Dorian, Basil, Henry, and Gwendolyn attend a formal party, hosted by Patricia Ruxton (Isa Miranda). She's a rich American who bought herself a stately old home in England and now dabbles in real estate and property development. Mrs. Ruxton (dressed in flaming red orange chiffon, with a remarkably hideous hat) wants to buy Selby, Dorian's family home. After dinner, the decadent crowd accompanies Dorian to the theater, where Sybil and her Romeo put on a miserable performance. Henry reacts smugly while Dorian is mortified, as the audience talks during the play and some people walk out. Breaking character, Sybil looks directly at Dorian and smiles at him. To her dismay, he is not amused. During her death scene, in despair, she tries to genuinely stab herself.

In Dorian's red sports car later, Sybil laughs hyster-cally. She says, "To hell with the theater!" Because she loves Dorian, she no longer cares for her art. "When I saw you with those carnivorous women tonight, the theater finally died for me." Disgusted that she made a fool of him by performing unprofessionally in front of his friends, Dorian snaps, "You're a bourgeois, sentimental bore" Back at the awful Ruxton party, the women smirk at Sybil, who leaves in a huff. Dorian ha fheartedly chases after her, but they fight again and he ends up in bed with Gwendolyn.

In the morning, Dorian notices the first signs of cruelty in his portrait. Dorian starts to suspect that the "unseen" world can influence the "seen" (mundane) world. He covers up the picture and sends a scraping of the paint to his chemist friend, Alan Campbell (Renato Romano), who analyses it and says it's perfectly ordinary. He sends Sybil a telegram asking her to forgive him and come back, but of course it's too late. Henry tells him that Sybil committed suicide by throwing herself into traffic.

Dorian's reaction to Sybil's death is more self-justifying than remorseful. He's not a tragic figure here, as he was in

Continued on page 73

# Cocktails for Four David Del Valle toasts Hurd Hatfield, Elizabeth Shepherd, and Curtis Harrington

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less. His varity overwhelms his perfect crime The teleplay became a metaphor for Hatfield's career as a whole Regardless of his artistry and skill as a stage and screen actor, the birthmark created by Oscar Wilde's ageless character became, like Dracula for Bela Lugosi, his legend and his

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It had been on my mind ever since Curtis' party that if two people were ever destined to meet, it was certainly the Lady Ligera and Dorian Gray With this in mind, I started theater and never have done a film as Dorian Gray."

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Curtis and Hurd soon acrived, the latter looking very dapper in an ultra-white sports jacket He soon captivated Elizabeth and myself with his courtly manner and similar views of the industry After a quick tour of my memorabina-laden apartment, Hurd and Elizabeth adjustmed to the kitch en and began a long conversation about their experiences in the theater In the meantime. Curtis and I, being like minded, talked about the popularity of such films as FRIDAY THE 13TH (1980) and how far we had strayed from such classic horror films as his friend MANY What'S BRIDE OF FRANK

DVDs, making it difficult to see DORIAN GRAY or anything else unless a special screening

As the host, I soon got us all regrouped in the living room and was delighted that Hurd and Elizabeth were indeed kindred spirits. Soon the conversation turned to the subject of horror films. I remarked that all three of my guests were typecast in the genre in one way or another Curhs was known as a director of thrulers that either involved Shelley Winters or children Elizabeth was best known for being Vincent Price's leading lady And Hurd was forever known as Dorian Gray

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One of the most fascinating things I learned during that afternoon came when Hurd confided to me that he'd kept the Egyptian cat prop from DORIAN GRAY. "The Cat of Bast was the giver of eternal life and since everyone assumed I was Dorian Gray, I wasn't about to take any chances with regard to that superstition " He later showed me a photograph of his house in Ireland and in a small window on the second floor one could plainly see the figure of that cat!

As the afternoon progressed, we all became comfort-able enough to discuss the hazards of fame, the pitfalls of anticipation, and the realization that perhaps this was as good as it gets. Hatfield was the first to remark that no one in Hollywood, especially at MGM, wanted to make a film that addressed homosexuality. It was at that point that I handed Hurd my treasured copy of Parker Tyler's seminal work, Screening the Sexes. Homosexuality in the Maures (Holl Rinehart, and Winston, 1972) It was Tyler's belief "that the simple, reactionary two-sex system is a much-outdated institution which reality should persuade us to junk."

Hurd was mesmerized by Tyler's observation that Dorian Gray, as portrayed by Hatfield, "does not seem made of the fine beaten gold of the aristocratic type of beauty visualized by Wilde. Besides, Hatfield is dark, not fair, of course, the tenor of Doman's relationship with Lord Henry is a polite charade necessary to the concealed meaning of both the movie and the novel. We see Dorian meticulously dressed and serene, strolling through his mansion as if it were the house of a lover's dream." I asked Hatfield if it was difficult being gay and playing a character that MGM made sexually ambiguous. His reply was that, in sophisticated society, the subject never came up. Anyone who was familiar with the works of Oscar Wilde knew this aspect of his persona and moved along. When I tactlessly brought up the 1970 Hel-

It was such a unique situation to hear these three tal- mut Berger version of Wilde's story, Hatfield grew defen sion with showing everything. For example, Hurd recalled with disgust the scene of Dorian cruising a back sailor in a urinal and lamented the indignities Wilde's creation had suffered at the hands of such libertines.

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## Cocktails for Four

### David Del Valle toasts

## Hurd Hatfield, Elizabeth Shepherd, and Curtis Harrington

urd Hatfield has intrigued me as an actor ever since I was a child and saw him as Dorian in THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY (1945). Subsequently, whenever his name would pop up in such films as the epic EL CID (1961) or the surrealistic MICKEY ONE (1965), Hatfield was always the center of my attention. There is one particular episode of ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS ("None Are So Blind") that permanently etched his persona in my memory. Hatfield portrays an outrageously vain and desperate young man whose fortunes depend on doing away with his wealthy aunt. He gives himself away to the authorities by refusing to acknowledge a large birthmark on the left side of his face, making any of his disguises point-

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When I first came to Holly wood in the summer of 1976, little did I know that I would be fortunate enough to meet and sometimes befriend those I admired so much on the screen. One of my first and best friends in the business was director Curtis Harrington. Curtis was and is a renowned him I met not only Hurd Hatfield, ton to his home. but many fascinating and remarkable characters.

Curtis lives in a wonderful Art Nouveau-filled home in the Hollywood Hills, which contains such artifacts as Marlene Dietrich's shoes and props from some of his own films Hurd Hatfield was to be a house guest for a week or so during June of 1978, and Curtis very kindly arranged a meeting, for which I am forever grateful. Hatfield proved to be a superb raconteur and a good sport regarding his most famous character. It became clear to me during that meeting that the theater really held Hatfield's heart. He confided that he nearly wished he had never played the role that made him world-famous.

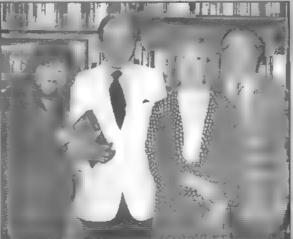
At the time, I was seeing a great deal of actress Elizabeth Shepherd, whose career was also overwhelmed by a character created another famous writer-Edgar Allan Poe Her performance in Roger Corman's TOMB OF LIGEIA (1964) may be the finest ever given in any of Corman's seven Poe films. Elizabeth was an accomplished stage actress and her heart also belonged to the theater.

It had been on my mind ever since Curtis' party that, if two people were ever destined to meet, it was certainly the Lady Ligeia and Dorian Gray. With this in mind, I started organizing a small afternoon cocktail party. The minute I explained my plan to Curtis, he graciously arranged to bring Hurd Haffield to my little source. The result would be an unforgettable afternoon.

Elizabeth Shepherd was the first to arrive. She had re-cently been to some television auditions and was rather chagrined at the lack of creativity permeating the industry Talent doesn't necessarily determine who gets the part. A name to draw in the sponsors is the main focus. The situation angered Elizabeth to the point that her license plate read TVQUE, "Que" being one's recognition value in the industry. I was all too aware that Elizabeth was too good an actress not to be working constantly, but we were living in a

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Curtis and Hurd soon arrived, the latter looking very dapper in an ultra-white sports jacket. He soon captivated Elizabeth and myself with his courtly manner and similar views of the industry After a quick tour of my memorabilia laden apartment, Hurd and Elizabeth adjourned to the kitchen and began a long conversation about their experiences in the theater. In the meantime, Curtis and I, being like-minded, talked about the popularity of such films as FRIDAY THE 13TH (1980) and how far we had strayed from such classic horror films as his friend James Whale's BRIDE OF FRANK-ENSTEIN (1935) These were the days before VCRs, laserdiscs, and DVDs, making it difficult to see



party-giver and admirer of Holly David Del Valle welcomes horror-film icons Hurd wood's Golden Fra, and through Hatfield, Elizabeth Shepherd, and Curtis Harring-

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As the host, I soon got us all regrouped in the living room and was delighted that Hurd and Elizabeth were indeed kindred spirits. Soon the conversation turned to the subject of horror films. I remarked that all three of my guests were typecast in the genre in one way or another. Curtis was known as a director of thrillers that either involved Shelley Winters or children. Elizabeth was best known for being Vincent Price's leading lady. And Hurd was forever known as Dorian Gray.

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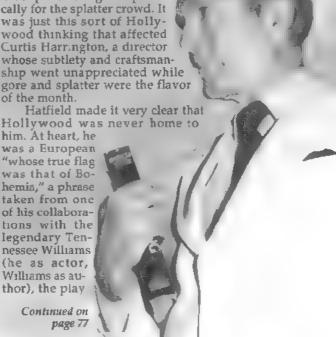
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## **BOOK ENDS**

#### The Scarlet Street Review of Books

#### ROGER CORMAN

Beverly Gray Renaissance Books, 2000 304 pages-\$23 95

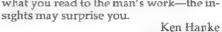
Though unauthorized (the subtitle is An Unauthorized Biography of the Godfather of Indie Filmmaking) this is very much an insider's view of Roger Corman Beverly Gray worked as Corman's assistant for some 16 months at New World Pictures, and again spent eight years as story editor at Concorde-New Horizons with Corman. In this respect, Beverly Gray not only has a remarkable grasp on Corman personally, but she also has the connections to others in Corman's orbit factors that are certainly a plus for any biographer. She puts these things to her advantage, creating comprehensive, heavily fact-laden (sometimes too much so) picture of Roger Corman and what drives him. This much makes for a wonderful book on the filmmaker.

Gray quickly establishes the dichotomy that marks Corman in her introduction, where she describes first meeting Corman and discussing "motion picture aesthetics" with him, promising to read-at his insistence-Siegfried Kracauer's Theory of Film (1960). She writes: "Of course, I complied, wondering how this ponderous tome would shed light on the making of Corman's cinematic staples: low-budget monster movies and biker flicks. I'm still wondering. He never mentioned Krac-auer again." While that neatly sums up a central peculiarity about Corman-who sometimes seems either a very deliberate artist, or a completely accidental one-it also sums up the reason that this book is only a part of the story of Roger Corman Gray is certainly correct in calling Kracauer's book a "ponderous tome," and she is equally on the mark concerning Corman's staple product, but this should clae us in on the fact that Gray is not about to give us a biography that even attempts to establish Corman's actual place in film on an artistic basis, nor is she going to explore the works of Corman in any depth. The pictures, their meanings, their qualities (or lack thereof) are mostly re-

ferred to in passing or in terms of their financial success or failure. Most critical evaluation is there only when someone other than the author talks about it. There's nothing wrong with this approach, so long as the reader is aware that the book is more about Corman the man, Corman the businessman, and Corman's methods of working than it is about Corman's work.

Admitting what Roger Corman does not offer, it should be noted that what it does offer is fascinating. This inner look at the workings of Corman's film companiesnot to mention the workings of Corman's mind-takes the reader into a delightfully quirky world, ruled by a man who seems at war with himself—one part iconoclast to one part hidebound traditionalist. Corman emerges as the ultimate hipster, who, at bottom, is uncomfortable with being hip. Intentionally or not, Gray offers us a Roger Corman who isn't so much half-huckster/half artist, as one who is just too conflicted and too personally indifferent to the rigors of art to ever quite cross the line into the realm of being a great filmmaker.

For anyone wishing to understand Corman's films better, this book is a great starting point. Read the book and apply what you read to the man's work-the in-



#### HITCHCOCK BECOMES HITCHCOCK

Paul M. Jensen Midnight Marquee Press, 2000

224 pages—\$20 Just when you thought everything worth writing on the subject of Alfred Hitchcock had already been written, along comes Paul Jensen. Hitchcock Becomes HITCHCOCK. The British Years should take a place alongside esteemed tomes such as Hitchcock/Truffaut (1967), Hitchcock on Hitchcock (1995), and the Donald Spoto duo (1983's The Art of Alfred Hitchcock and 1976's The Dark Side of Genius) on the bookshelf of any serious student of the great director's work. In a taut 224 pages, Jensen masterfully reveals key techniques and prominent themes that defined and shaped the Hitchcock ouvre.

For starters, Jensen breaks down the cinematic techniques Hitchcock brought to his early British films. Pictures such as BLACKMAIL (1929), MURDER (1930), and SABOTAGE (1936) betrayed more of the director's German Expressionist in fluence than his later films. Hitchcock used various devices (montage, composite dissolves, subjective camera, juxtaposition of sounds and images) to bring the viewer inside characters' heads. The director's later British and American films would be more straightforward Jensen also tracks the emergent central Hitchcockian themes and is particularly effective at emphasizing Hitch's fatalistic attitudes about romance in general and marriage in particular.

In the process, Jensen charts Hitchcock's emergence in the early sound era as one of England's foremost film craftsmen. He argues persuasively that the critical and commercial failure of RICH AND STRANGE (1932) represented a pivotal moment for Hitchcock. Afterward, the director redefined himself as a suspense specialist. Hitch pushed the lofter thematic elements of his films into the background and, in the process, emerged as one of cinema's most popular entertainers and greatest artists, a maker of films enjoyable on a surface level, but with richer rewards waiting beneath the surface for more astute audiences.

For the sake of the publicity camera, Roger Corman and Vincent Price pretend to discuss a magazine article on the set of PIT AND THE PENDULUM (1961).



However, because the greater themes of Hitchcock's films were not in the forefront, Hitch remained underappreciated by most critics during his own lifetime With precision and clarity, Jensen demonstrates that these deeper meanings remained in the director's films, even though Hitchcock himself often denied their existence. "Like the best dramatists," Jensen writes toward the end of his book, "he blended character with action, often rendering the two inseparable. Like the best artists, he mixed conscious ex pression with unconscious revelation, often leaving viewers uncertain where the first ends and the second begins."

Jensen maps out his positions clearly and supports them by reverse-engineering relevant films scene by scene, and by quoting Hitchcock himself (with sound bites gathered from numerous sources). Although the book focuses specifically on the British era, Jensen's insights apply to nearly all of Hitchcock's work. Readers should come away with a deeper appreciation of not only the British pictures, but the entire Hitchcock filmography. Jensen's insight is matched only by his splendid wordcraft. This is a lively and compelling, even addictive, read.

Midnight Marquee Press proves the old saw about a book and its cover by wrapping Hitchcock Becomes HITCHCOCK in a bland and somewhat confusing package. On the cover, an elder Hitch squints, open-mouthed, past his own silhouette at a younger Hitch, who's looking off the page entirely, perhaps because the right side of his head is obscured by an mexplicable black blotch. All this is in black-and-white, on a red fading-to-white background. (Wait a minute! I just realized that the black botch is actually the silhouette of the younger Hitch! So the elder Hitch is looking past his own silhouette and the silhouette of the younger H.tch at the younger Hitch. But hey, it took me months to figure that out!) A book this good deserves a more attractive presentation.

Do not be deterred by such quibbles, brave reader. Any new work from Jensen—author of The Cinema of Fritz Lang (1969), Boris Karloff and His Films (1974), and The Men Who Made the Monsters (1996) is cause for celebration Hitchcock Becomes HITCHCOCK is his best work so far, a revealing and enjoyable examination of one of our foremost filmmakers.

Mark Clark

#### THE GOREHOUND'S GUIDE TO SPLATTER FILMS

Scott Aaron Stine
McFarland & Co., 2000
296 pages—\$29.95
Some will say that splatter films don't fit
in the Scarlet Street oeuvre, but when

video stores first opened in the eighties and horror fans used to haunt the shelves for the latest fright films, many of those films—especially the more obscure Euro horrors—served up splatter and gore by the bucketful. With the advent of DVD, many of those same titles are with us again, often in prints superior to their video counterparts of two decades ago.

The capsule reviews that make up The Gorehound's Guide to Splatter Films of the 1960s and 1970s are funny and precise, and cover a wide range of titles, listed al phabetically. The book (the first in a planned trilogy) begins with a brief introduction and definition of what makes a splatter film, followed by an interesting appendix on the "cultural" phenomenon of snuff films and a list of sources—including Scarlet Street—where one may buy many of the titles covered

It's the kind of reference book you can either read from cover to cover in one sitting or browse through occasionally. Either way, it's a good read. I plan on taking a copy with me the next time I visit the local video store.

-Kevin G Shinnick

#### BING CROSBY: A POCKETFUL OF DREAMS

Gary Giddens Little, Brown and Company 728 pages—\$30

In ROAD TO UTOPIA (1946), the best of the seven road comedies starring Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, and Dorothy Lamour, Crosby loses a talent contest and its cash prize to a trained monkey. Hope gives him the evil eye, and cracks, "Next time I bring Sinatra."

If Hope had brought Sinatra, ROAD TO UTOPIA would be better known today, since there's no denying that Old Blue Eyes has eclipsed Der Bingle as the most celebrated pop singer of the 20th century That's too bad, because Bing Crosby's accomplishments are prodigious, and he deserves far better than the relative anonymity into which he's fallen.

In Bing Crosby: A Pocketful of Dreams the first of a two-volume set covering the life of the Old Groaner, Gary Giddens tackles the much-needed task of setting the second straight. He reminds us that Bing was the first full time vocalist signed to an orchestra, that he made more studio recordings than any other singer in history (400 more than Sinatra), that he recorded the most popular record of all time ("White Christmas," the only single to make American pop charts 20 times), that he had 396 charted records between 1927 and 1962 (compared to 220 for Paul Whiteman, 209 for Sinatra, 149 for Flyis Presley, 129 for Glenn Miller, 118 for Nat King Cole 85 for Louis Armstrong, 68 for the Beatles), that he scored the most num-



Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, and golf.

ber one hits ever (38, compared to 24 for the Beatles and 18 for Elvis), and that between 1915 and 1980 he was the only film actor to rank as the number-one box-office attraction five times!

Giddens reminds us, in this book that covers Bing Crosby's life and career only up to 1940, that the man was a star of the

first magnitude. The author's research is exhaustive without ever becoming overwhelming There's also an "horrific" subtext to some of his writing Crosby's name doesn't usually come up in connection with fright films, so it was a surprise to learn that he acted in a college production of THE BELLS, that heary old chestnut made into a 1926 silent film with Boris Karloff When Crosby and Al Rinker (before Harry Barris joined them to form The Rhythm Boys) made their first appearance in a movie theater as an opening act for the feature presentation, the film was THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (1925)! Gid dens may very well be a closet horror fan, in fact, since he makes reference to facts known only to such creatures of the night (for instance, that one of Bing's earliest signature songs was composed in part by George Waggner, the director of 1941's THE WOLF MAN), or alludes to horror films to make a point (as when he attests to the popularity of radio in the early thirties by suggesting that 1931's FRANK

geoning medium)
But you needn't seek horror references
to find this book a fascinating, well-written study of the man who, for a good part
of the past hundred years, was the coolest
of the cool and, as a singer, the greatest of

ENSTEIN is rife with allusions to the bur-

the great.

-Richard Valley

Coming Soon in Scarlet Street: RETURN OF THE VAMPIRE, THE FLY, JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS, THE BLACK CAT, KISS OF THE VAMPIRE, CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON, and THE BRIDES OF DRACULA!

#### SHANE BRIANT

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when he put it on for the first time. He said behind this awful mask, "What do you think of it?"—and I couldn't say what Í thought because I thought it looked so awful and unbelievable! I tried to think of something kind, so I looked over the whole suit and said, "God, the feet are great! They look the most believable thing." Dave said, "The feet are mine!" (Laughs) The only things that were his own were the hands and feet, and they were the only things that looked believeable. You see that monster trying to play the violin-I mean, Mel Brooks couldn't have done a better job! (Laughs) In fact, the only thing that was really enjoyable about making that film was working with Peter Cushing, who was a true professional, and with some of the actors in the smaller parts, who were obstalwarts of the British cinema. Every day I'd come in and see someone who'd been around tor years and years, being totally professional and giving lovely little performances SS: Actors such as Patrick Troughton, Peter Madden, Bernard Lee

SB: Then came the monster and you were left wondering what on Earth was going on! In those days, too, they'd always cast a young girl with nice rosy cheeks and big tits-regardless of talent! (Laughs) I'm not casting aspersions on Madeline Smith, but Hammer's priority was not to get the best actress—just the best tits. That's the way it was done These days, they're beginning to realize that you don't need Miss Universe in the female lead, you can have someone like Ellen Barkin, who s as ugly as sin but sexy to a lot of people. It's the same with Barbra Streisand. They can act, and to be able to act is more important to the role than whether they can take off their clothes and tlash a great pair of tits

SS: Was Madeline Smith unable to hande da logue? Is that the real reason she's mute in FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL?

SB: Oh, no, I don't think so! I don't mean to give the impression that Madeline Smith couldn't act!

SS: You mentioned Peter Cushing .

SB: Lovely guy, Peter; very professional, worked very hard on his lines and in those days he used to have a problem learning and speaking his lines He was very aware; he didn t want to make mistakes and stumble over the words, so he would speak quite slowly. But he was always on time, and always worked very hard nothing was too much trouble. Very sad man, because his wife had died and he didn't have very much interest in life. He lived for his work. He was always very charming to me and always very helpful with suggestions. I learned a lot from Peter.

SS: Was it difficult to keep a straight face while performing the film's operations?

SB: Oh, yes, absolutely! The scene where we eventually take out the brain from the monster was particularly memorable. We were supposed to shoot it on a Friday and never got 'round to it, so it was postponed till Monday. Well, they had put a sheep's brain into the body and didn't refrigerate it over the weekend, so when we shot the scene on Monday I cut open the top of the head and the smell was so appalling from this rotten, decomposing sheep's brain that we almost threw up. SS: Oh, my God! (Laughs)

SB: Peter's line was, "Well, right! We've done that! Let's have some lunch!" And in came Madeline with a tray of food, and he looked at it and said, "Ummm, kidneys!"

(Laughs) We had a good time

SS: Terence Fisher wasn't in very good health at the time he directed FRANKENSIEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL He'd also had a serious accident some time before, when he was hit by a car and broke his leg

SB: He was very frail and looked very old. He hobbled around with a cane, but his mind was still pretty on the ball and he knew what he was doing It was "Now we do this and now we do that." Directing for him was like riding a bicycle; he just got up on it and did it again' I d'm't want it to sound like it was a piece of cake, but he could have directed it from a hospital bed with an intravenous drip in his arm. It was that simple for him

SS Do you feel he was a good technical direc tor or a good actor's director?

SB: He was both, really Technically he was very good in an old-fashioned way, the way they were making films in Eng land going back to the thirties FRANK-ENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HFI I was made right at the end of his life, and he had his way of doing things, which he did very professionally. His were straightforward films, nothing unusual about them, no new ground being broken. As far as actors were concerned well, he always listened to my ideas and was never overbearing. I like directors who give me inspiration: I don't like a director to say no to everything I suggest SS. Fisher rarely used tracking shets

SB. Oh, he never had much time to shoot them It was time more than anything else. It was always a bit rushed and the budget was always very tight with Hammer. There was never very much money SS: There sa scene in the film with you being hosed down by the asylum attendants. Was the force of the water really that powerful?

SB: Oh, yes! It was very painful, actually, because the force of a fire hose is quite strong. The stunt coordinator said. "Don't p worry, we'll make damn sure that we don't hit you in the balls." Then they hit me in the balls' (Laughs) They got me in the face, too At the end of it, my entire body was red and bruised, as if I'd been hit by a prize fighter.

SS: Hopefully, they didn't spend more than a da, filming in You mightn't have survived SB: No, we spent just one afternoonwhich was still exhausting, but when you're that young, you'll do anything A director says, "Look, Shane, I'm sure you can jump off this building into this air bag. I'm just sure you're going to do it really well " And you do it! (Laughs) I re-member on THF MACKINTOSH MAN, the John Huston picture, the stunt coordinator said, "Look, there's this scene where your character runs down Harry

Andrews and kills him outside a railway station Mr. Huston likes his actors to do their own stunts if it's not dangerous, and to our minds this isn't dangerous. All you have to do is drive in a straight line at 19 miles an hour." I said, "Not 20, but 19 exactly?" "Well, just under 20 would be perfect. Just keep going all the way past at 19 miles an hour and the stunt man will come up at an angle and do a roll over the bonnet." I was nervous, but Mr Huston wanted me to do it, John Huston wanted me to do it, so of course I said I'd do it.

SS: Of course

SB: No problem! I'm a real pro and I m not scared and all those things that you say when you're 20. So just before we did it, up came this stunt coordinator and he said, "Oh, you better wear these leather gloves," I said, "Well, I don't like wearing leather gloves when I'm driving." He said, "Well, just in case something hap-pens" I said, "But nothing's going to hap-pen; you said it was safe" "Yeah, yeah, it's very safe, but just in case something happens. For instance, if this guy should come in contact with the windscreen, you might have to punch it out. That's why you need the leather gloves "By this time I was slutting myself thinking that Paul, the stunt man, might come through the windscreen! I asked about it, and the stunt coordinator said, "No, no, it won't

SS: Famous last words! (Laugl 5)

SB. Exactly! So off I went in this very old rover, trying to estimate 19 miles an hour-and, of course, the stunt man got caught up in the bumper and went up in the air and came flying through the windscreen with this tremendous explosion' He was hanging half in and half out of the car. I was thinking the man's dead, but I couldn't stop 'cause he'd have gone straight out and under the front wheels Finally I stopped and the guy was actually all right, though he was very bruised and had a bit of concussion. The makeup woman came running up and started brushing the glass off my face. "You better get the glass off your face before a little piece goes behind your eye ball and cuts your optic nerve, which has been known to happen before but it won't happen now "(Laughs) And the stunt coordinator came over and said, "Are you okay, Shane? That really looked great, but we have to do it again, because you seemed to hesitate when Paul came through the window." I said, "I seemed to hesitate! What are you talking about, I seemed to hesitate! I thought the guy was dead! Now you're telling me we're going to do it again? Forget it!" So I don't do any stunts, now; I leave that to the pro-fessionals. I don't leap off high buildings or do anything the slightest bit dangerous. The fire hose in FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL? No. wouldn't do it again!

SS: In 1980, you worked with Jack Palance on

HAWK, THE SLAYER

SB: He's a lovely guy; he's got a wonderful, black sense of humor. One day, a girl said, "Jack, are you going to lunch?" He said, "Why, do you want me to buy you lunch?" She said, "Oh, no, it's not that I want you to buy me lunch. I just wondered if you were going to lunch with friends." He said, "Why, do you want to meet my friends?" Nobody ever knew if he was joking or not. We used to have lunch every day at Pinewood, but mostly he kept to himself. He's a bit of a loner.

SS: You played his son

SB: Frankly, I thought my casting as Jack Palance's son left a lot to be desired in the credibility stakes. (Laughs) I don't think I look tremendously like Jack Palance, but I was very glad to do it. My favorite line from HAWK, THE SLAYER was, "I am Gogo, son of Voltan!" I said, "If I say that, everyone will laugh!" The director said, "No, no, that's really good and I like that." And then when I saw it in the cinema, everyone laughed. You can never rely too much on your director.

SS: Especially on a line like that Is there a particular type of movie that you like doing?

**SB:** Comedy, actually. I've always liked doing comedy, the well-written comedy that exists in the States and sometimes in England Really well-scripted one liners.

SS: Why did you move to Australia? SB: I moved to Australia because I did LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER, and also because I'd been living with an Australian girl for 10 years in England and her visa had run out. She had to go back to Australia, and I came over to do a promotional tour for LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER, a month of talk shows and press and all that stuff. At the time, there was a huge boom in Australian films. The weather was fantastic and the food was cheap and the wine was cheap, and you could sit on the beach and be poor. It was better than living in London and working for the BBC and being paid badly, so I came over here and did about two films a year for about five or six years. The good times! It's a nice place to live, but every year I go back to the States to do the pilot season. I stay in Los Angeles for about four months, and do the odd thing or two and hope that I will actually get lucky. When I was 20, I would have sooner done Chekhov than do sitcoms in Hollywood, I'd be more interested in the work and growing as an actor. Now that I'm older, if some



Win a few, lose a few—but poor old Victor Frankenstein (Peter Cushing) loses them all! Dr. Simon Helder (Shane Briant) and the mute Sarah (Madeline Smith) try to comfort him.

one offered me a million dollars to do DAYS OF OUR LIVES, I'd do that

**SS:** Do you feel it's part of an actor's job to sell himself as a product?

SB: I think so, yes. You've got to promote yourself to make yourself interesting, so that, when people see a photograph of you in the paper, they say, "Oh, gee! That's the guy who took all his clothes off in front of the Queen at Royal Ascot!" (Laughs) Everyone knows Robert Redford, but if you're just another ordinary actor and you ask people, "Have you ever heard of Shane Briant?"—well, maybe three have If you're on the front page of The National Enquirer, stark naked with Madonna, people tend to remember you the next week.

SS: They also save that copy of The Enquirer. SB. Years ago, when we were filming STRAIGHT ON TILL MORNING, I met with a publicist, He said, "There are two

ways to promote yourself. You can have dinner three times a week at the White Flephant Club on the river and have lunch three times a week at Burke's." That was where everyone used to go to be seen, but I said, "That would cost me thousands of dollars; I can't do that." He said, "The alternative is that you buy a houseboat and live on the Thames, and buy an elephant and paint it pink and chain it to the front of the houseboat." I said, "What?" He said, "Everyone in London will know that you're that pecuhar actor with a pink elephant on the front of his houseboat! Everyone will know who you are and you'll become a celebrity. Ultimately it will depend on your talent, but people will know who you are." Anyway, I didn't do either—but maybe I should have bought that houseboat and that elephant!

#### SEX O'PEEL

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viction—he has been led astray by these older men, both of whom covet him for his innocence and beauty. Peel, who was certainly a looker and was once a protege of acting great John Gielgud, may have been drawing the characterization from his own experience.

"David, when I knew him, was a very young, very attractive, very nice boy," Dean explained. "He looked marvelous all his life, to the point that he may have had a portrait hidden in his attic I didn't ask him. I knew nothing about his personal life, really, or whether he had a boyfriend or patron or any of that. He was just fun to be with, fun to have around. We didn't first meet at the pool; we met professionally and struck up a friendship. We lost track of each other, because I moved to America and he gave

up acting. He virtually disappeared from the scene after that, and I'm afra.d I didn't keep up with him at all."

Roy Dean's own acting career was superceded by photography in the sixties, and he's still at it. "My first book came out in 1966, and this new one is my 10th book. It's so big I can't even pick it up! I told the publisher, 'I can't even fit it in my bookcase.' And he said, 'It's not supposed to fit in your bookcase! It's a coffee table book!' It's been a big success and my name is getting around. It drives me crazy, though, because strange people suddenly want to speak with me They say, 'Hello, Mr. Dean!' or 'Hello, Roy!' and I want to say, 'Who the fuck are you?' In Palm Springs, they call me an icon in my own time!"

Sadly, Dean has no photos of David Peel, nothing that captures his handsome friend in seemingly eternal youth by that public pool in England. More than a pho-





When Bob Hope referred to Gale Sondergaard in ROAD TO RIO (1948) as the Black Widow, horror fans got the joke. Sondergaard had already played a similar femme fatale in SPIDER WOMAN (1944) and (pictured with Rondo Hatton) SPIDER WOMAN STRIKES BACK (1946)

#### PERSONALITY PLUS

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do. They could be the Andrews Brothers!" "Yeah, Patti, LaVerne, and Pancho," agrees Hope, sensing impending disaster. To further the image, Crosby teaches the Wieres three "hep" phrases—"You're telling me," "You're in the groove, Jackson," and "This is murder"—to which they are supposed to respond on finger signals. This mad scheme quickly proves hopeless when they run afoul of the boss, a connoisseur of American slang, who wants to "chew the grease" with the boys before they go on, and inadvertently gives them the signals at all the wrong moments. It's probably the most concentrated, carefully structured comedy scene in any Road picture, matched only by a terrific pantomime scene (inspired by Laurel and Hardy) with Crosby, Hope, the Wieres, and five hats.

Even more than previous entries, RIO cares not one whit about its own plot, which is spoofed mercilessly. When the pair outline their plans for a dramatic finish in which they rescue Lamour and foil Sondergaard, we hear an agonized scream, and Hope explains, "It's the Warner Brothers; they're very jealous." The help offered by mysterious good guy Rodrigues (Frank Pug.ia) turns out to be virtually unrelated footage of Jerry Colonna leading a cavalry charge that never arrives. ("Whaddaya know? We never quite made it! Exciting, though, wasn't it?") Even the all-important "papers" (which no one ever mentions without first looking in both directions for potential eavesdroppers) that will thwart Sondergaard's evil plans are dismissed when Crosby rips them up, gravely informing us, "The world must never know."

RIO has been released on DVD by a small company named Brentwood Home Video, but there's no reason to fear the sloppy transfers and poor quality usually associated with minor labels. The film looks perfectly fine (though slightly grainy in spots), and the sound is excellent.

ROAD TO BALI has been given three DVD releases by

ROAD TO BALI has been given three DVD releases by Platinum Disc Corporation, Laserlight, and Brentwood Home Video. (Stick with Brentwood; their disc is far superior.) The film is almost impossible to dislike, yet it's unquestionably a marked comedown for the series. As with UTOPIA, the plot is a large part of the problem, but where the earlier entry insisted that the plot was of value, it at least had a plot BALI makes the same mistake without realizing that it has no plot at all! Because of this, the entire enterprise seems a little dull-witted, and, worse, a little condescending. That it has achieved a little niche in film history by being the only Road Picture in color is too bad, since of

all the Roads, it needs color the least. It's less elaborate than RIO and less exotic than the earlier films, and color only serves to emphasize its essential smallness

The basic premise is classic Road Picture formula—the boys on the run from maritally-inclined ladies and their shotgun-toting relatives, drift into an adventure by posing as deep-sea divers. Individual moments—the pair singing "The Whiffenpoof Song" in the midst of a flock of sheep that helpfully contributes the requisite "bah-bah-bahs," Hope and Crosby surrounded by amorous native girls and hearing an offscreen scream ("It's Errol Flynn, he can't stand it.")—delight, but too many of the gags are too obvi-

ously set up.

Still, the film boasts many nice touches. When a branch the boys are leaning on collapses, they remain magically in place. "Why don't we fall?" asks Crosby. "Paramount wouldn't dare—at your age," explains Hope. "The Merry Go-Runaround" is a pleasant song, staged with a sense of fun Best, though, is the comic culmination of the Hope/ Crosby relationship ending up in their marriage to each other! Decked out in native headgear, each thinks he is marrying Lamour. When they wake the next morning with only each other in the marriage bed, Hope remarks, "One of us better go to Reno before Louella finds out about this." It's all in fun, of course, but it does seem an apt summation of the series. The more traditional ending, in which Crosby ends up with Lamour and a magically produced Jane Russell (in her dance-hall costume from 1952's SON OF PALE-FACE) doesn't alter the fact that, according to the mythology of the series, the boys are legally married on a tropical island somewhere in the Paramount South Seas!

Ten years later came THE ROAD TO HONG KONG. This British-made effort by Panama and Frank to revive the Road Pictures was undeniably ill-advised, and the problem was compounded by replacing Lamour with Joan Collins, while relegating Lamour to an insulting, but amusing, guest bit as "our special cup of tea." Some of the individual sequences are certainly choice, and the film boasts a splendid villain in Robert Morley, but it's just too late in the day—a situation underlined by the presence of the up-and-coming Peter Sellers in a guest part as an Indian doctor. (After explaining how to extract the venom from a snake bite by sucking the poison out of the wound, he is asked what happens if the snake bites you in a piace you can't reach. "That is when you find out who your real friends are," he replies.)

HONG KONG works reasonably well in its earlier portions, gamely trotting out the old gags and situations. The songs, while not quite up to the standards of the original films, are pleasant, and, despite sounding too much like studio recordings, are often well woven into the action, especially the title tune. The film has a marked tendency toward mechanical gags, which are at odds with the freewheeling atmosphere of the films it seeks to emulate. This is why the relatively simple sequence in which the boys briefly enlist Lamour's aid is the best thing in the film. Upon hearing the plot so far, Dottie opts to hide the duo "From the spies?" asks Hope. "No, from the critics," she reasons, dressing them as part of her cabaret act-which, of course, they proceed to destroy with the help of a mustache-eating fish. Nothing else in the film surpasses this, and by the ending the whole affair becomes bogged down in a series of effects-oriented gags involving space flight. The idea of Hope and Crosby in orbit probably seemed appealing in theory. In practice, it's extremely flat.

HONG KONG wasn't a disgraceful end to the series. (Other comedy teams—Laurel and Hardy, The Marx Brothers, Abbott and Costello—certainly went out on worse notes.) However, it's the earlier films that will always define the series, and it's comforting to know that with the flick of a switch, we can conjure up our old friends (who will be magically as they always have been) and travel with them

down their various screwy and tuneful roads.

#### THE PICTURES OF DORIAN GRAY

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most previous productions. Helmut Berger—perhaps drawing on his own turbulent life as movie star and lover of director Luchino Visconti-plays Dorian as the kind of man who creates so much emotional wreckage wherever he goes that he'd curse his own life even without supernatural help. The portrait only prolongs the period in which he can get by on his looks and do the kinds of things he'd probably do anyway.

The main tension in the film stems from the long, evolving power struggle between Dorian and Henry. Dorian, who takes Henry's cynical epigrams more seriously than Henry ever does, will sleep with anyone to gain an advantage-even the repellant but rich Mrs. Ruxton. In her stable, he dispassionately fucks her from behind, as they stand in the stall with a stallion named Prince Charming (Dorian's nickname in Wilde's novel, though not

in this film).

By this time, the painting has changed enough for Dorian to take it upstairs and hide it under a red velvet covering, in his attic-and no wonder, considering Dorian's social life When Gwendolyn jealously catches Dorian with another female guest on Henry's yacht, he makes love to Gwendolyn, too. Then the two women have sex while Dorian takes a shower. When Henry follows Dorian into the shower stall and begins soaping him, Dorian doesn't seem totally surprised, and doesn't resist. In another funny, ribald scene, Dorian cruises a country marina. He and a handsome black man lock eyes. In a public restroom, the two use the urinals, their backs to the camera, then turn their heads toward each other slowly, and give each other meaningful looks. At the same time that he's behaving like gay playwright and notorious tea-room devotee Joe Orton (considered by many the "modern" successor to Wilde), Dorian earns a reputation as a Don Juan. (Though he seduces women for financial advantage or to gain control of their husbands, it seems unlikely that a gay man would sleep with women by the dozens.)

Once the portrait liberates Dorian from conventional morality, though, he's probably meant to be a true satyr, bisexual as satyrs are in ancient mythology. The film carries the portrait theme beyond the painting. Renderings of Dorian now include photographs, as he starts posing for Xrated magazines. From a sidewalk vendor, Basil buys one such publication, called Cinema X ("International Guide for Adult Audiences"), which features a cover shot of Dorian. Furtively, Basil hides the magazine in his newspaper so that he can look at the pictures secretly on the busy street. The constant use of pictures reinforces the idea that Dorian is growing more superficial, turning into a collection of images more than a real human being When Henry wonders aloud how Dorian stays so youthful, Dorian says, "I sold

my soul to the Devil. You introduced me to him

The black cat stares impassively as Basil finally confronts Dorian at home and remonstrates with him over his 'compulsive behavior that the whole world knows about." "And is jealous of," says Dorian. Basil will have none of it. "You corrupt and destroy everyone who comes in contact with you," he complains-and, almost as though to prove him right, Dorian shows the artist upstairs to the secret attic room. In a frenzy, Dorian strips the drape off the picture and says, "Unveil my soul, Basil. See what we've created together! . . . It's your fault! You and that stinking portrait!" Dorian impulsively stabs Basil to death. As Basil s head strikes the desk, a vase falls to the floor and breaks: it is the end of the extended flashback, and we are back to the beginning of the story.

In a red-lit a night club, The Black Cock ("Members Only"), full of dancers gyrating to loud music, Dorian phones Alan Campbell and talks him into a meeting, Dorian pushes women away from him as he leaves the club. When

someone calls Dorian "Sir Galahad" (the pet name given him by Sybil in this version), James Vane, home from his long sea voyages, overhears and follows Dorian out of the club, threatening to shoot him in revenge for Sybil's death. Dorian convinces James that he can't be the same man who seduced Sybil, because he's much too young. Back in the club, a gay couple (one strongly resembling Oscar Wilde) reveals Dorian's true age to the incredulous sailor.

Back home, Dorian blackmails Alan Campbell into getting rid of Basil's body by threatening to make public a set of photos of Dorian having sex with Alan's wife. It's a rare example of one of the most overtly homosexual aspects of Wilde's novel (the relationship between Dorian and Alan)

being heterosexualized for this very gay film.
Some time later, at shooting party on Dorian's country estate, James Vane is shot and killed by accident, as in the novel. Once again, Dorian escapes peril, but he's falling apart from the stress. He asks Henry, in what appears to be a postcoital conversation, "Can't men change? I'm tired. Tired of it all " In a close shot, from the waist up, Dorian and Henry look as though they're lying nude and sweaty in bed together-but then the camera pulls back to reveal that they're lying on racks in a bathhouse sauna. They're side by side, yes, but at different levels, with Dorian slightly above Henry. Henry is covered with a towel from the waist down, while Dorian has one hand strategically placed to cover the naughty bits. (The "R" rating stays safe!)

Later, watching Dorian bathe nude—though not frontally-in the cold pool, Henry speculates about Basil's disappearance. Dorian hints that Basil is dead, and goes so far as to say, "I might have killed him." Henry doesn't believe it, but guesses aloud that Dorian must have sold his soul. When Dorian says that even youth is boring, Henry chuckles and says, "I'd give anything to be so bored-anything, that is, except get up early, and make love to women." (Wilde's actual line is "To win back my youth there is nothing I would not do—nothing—except take exercise, get up early, or be a useful member of the community ") Disgusted by his own body's signs of age, Henry prattles on and on about Dorian's youthful beauty, until Dorian tells him to

Despite Henry's role of mentor and Svengali, it's symbolically appropriate that Dorian lies slightly above Henry in the steam bath, because Dorian has taken control. For all his cynical talk, Henry is vulnerable. He's transparently smitten with Dorian, and Dorian knows it. This knowledge gives Dorian power. He keeps Henry loyal, to the point where Henry has trouble believing the ugly truth that Dorian is a murderer, even when Dorian's behavior ought to rouse suspicion, and even when he hands Henry this oblique but not terribly subtle confession. The film spells out the evil that Dorian does, and it's neither his substance abuse nor his sexual promiscuity: he uses people. For his own selfish pleasure and for the joy of controlling others, he makes his conquests think he cares about them when he doesn't. He dumps them whenever they become inconvenient. A sociopath but not an utter monster, Dorian does sometimes feel guilty, but the guilt isn't strong enough to prevent him from doing more of the same.

Alan Campbell commits suicide, an event that finally drives Dorian over the edge. In his secret attic room, he looks at the picture, which now has wild gray hair, a green tinted face, and blood on its clawed hands. Horrified, shuddering, Dorian thinks of Basil and Alan, of all his victims. They flash before his eyes in strobelike pulses. He now knows just how low he can sink. He's in love with himself only in a shallow, narcissistic way, without really loving himself in the more altruistic sense of the word-and since he's a true Wildean creature and always kills the thing he loves, he now kills himself. With the camera from Dorian's point of view, he picks up a huge knife and seems to stab toward himself, not toward the portrait as in other dramatizations. Changing to the omniscient point of view, the camera shows Dorian's bloodled hands and a face that now echoes the aged, corrupt portrait. The portrait, meanwhile, has reverted to its original appearance of youth and beauty Dorian has dumped himself the same way he dumped his

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Even Basil, one of the few characters with conventional morals, voices an attitude common to most of these characters: he thinks he's not responsible for his own actions. Painting the fatal portrait, he claims that, "Some strange force seemed to be guiding my brush. It was almost as if I were punting my own soul "Before meating the subject of the portrait, Flarry expects Dorian to be "one of those charming, brainless types, the delight of hostesses in search of a table-setting. They're most valuable in the winter, when there are no flowers.

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Dorian loves looking at his own portrait and admiring himself in the mirror The camera focuses on his large, distinctive amber ring, as his voice resumes the prologue, "The stars, the cards, the human face—what good does it do to read the future in any of them, if the words cannot be changed? And If they cannot, then only one question remains: Who does the writing?" The ring dissolves into the painted ring on Dorian's hand in the portrait, as the camera pulls back and shows the picture for the first time "If I knew the answer to that, if I could be sure, then I would know whether to curse God for what my life has been,

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Donan's destruction swiftly follows. The viewer, from the camera's point of view behind the easel (by now the traditional placement for this scene, since it allows for the substitution of a blank canvas and the survival-for further takes-of the portrait) sees Dorian's knife fearing through the canvas from the back Beatrice, awakened by Doman's scream, finds him dead, lying on his back, with the knife in his heart. He now looks like the portrait in its final determration, nearly skeletal, rotted, with one eye white and his mouth gaping in a rictus. Beatrice identifies him by his amber ring. The picture has reverted to its original state of

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#### URSULA ANDRESS

Continued from page 40

One year later, the marriage was kaput John Derek went on to exploit wives Linda Evans (married from 1968 to 1974) and No Derek (1977 till his death in 1998), and Andress went on to appear in WHAT'S NEW, PUSSYCAT? and THE TENTH VICTIM (both 1965), THE BLUE MAX (1966), CASINO ROYALE (1967), PERFECT FRIDAY (1970), Ray Harryhausen's CLASH OF THE TITANS (1981, during which she met her lover of four years, actor Harry Hamun), and two dozen other thims

In 1994, Scarlet Street spoke briefly with Ursula Andress as part of our tribute to Peter Cushing, who had just died. The onetime She remembered Cushing and their fellow star, Christopher Lee, with great affection:

Ursula Andress. Oh, Peter Cushing was such a nice man! I did SHE with him, and we had such a pleasant time. I just saw Christopher Lee in Germany and he had talked about Peter. He said he had some heart trouble, so he must have finally had a heart attack, no?

Scarlet Street: His death was the result of can cer, actually

UA: It's very sad I honestly liked him a lot. He was so pleasant and he lived for his plays and his movies, and to be an actor. Christopher Lee and I were such good friends, too. We were living close to each other in the country outside London and really got to know each other

SS: Lee and Cushing were always very close UA: Such people as Peter Cushing, they don't exist anymore today. They were actors who really lived for their profession and they took time for personal feelings, they took time. He was so kind to people and always so very helpful.

#### **DENNIS WAYNE**

Continued from page 62

played by Gary Chryst who introduced Dorian to drugs and led him down a bad path. Actually, Gary portrayed Lord Henry Wotton, also

"Joe Layton was a star on Broadway, and he had worked in Hollywood. This was his first attempt at the Joffrey Ballet. He received a lot of publicity, a lot of attention, a lot of write-up—a lot of people were waiting for DOUBLE EXPOSURE. I didn't play Dorian like an out and out queen; I was more innocent. Besides, you don't have to be a queen to be gay; you could be a truck driver."

Wayne was particularly impressed by Cris Alexander's photography "With one bristle on his brush, Cris brushed the original so that each photo would be from the same negative, but it was reworked to age. Incredibly done! Incredibly done! During the technical rehearsals—and there were a great many in the baliet, because there's a lot of technical complications—I never looked at myself in the photographs. I kept it for the world

première, the opening night perfor mance. I looked at the final photograph and I was late for my next scene, because I was blown away! 'Holy shit' Is that me?' It was amazing! It was me, my body, but hairless, and the face and the teeth were incredible. It was scary!"

According to Wayne, the sheer horror of the final photograph was used to create DOUBLE EXPOS-URE's dencuement. "When I saw the picture, I was on a platform five feet off the ground. I didn't stab the photograph as in the novel and all the other versions, but the shock of seeing it made me fall back Dor, and ied from the fa.I."

Critical reaction to DOL BLE EX POSURE proved less than favorable. "Oh, they tore it apart—bad choreography, bad idea, bad stag ing, everything! There wasn't one thing good said about it, other than for the performers. It got torn apart, and it's never been revived. It was very popular with the audience, though, every time we performed it, it sold out. Unfortunate. It with the Joffrey Ballet, whenever they'd get a bad review from Clive Barnes, they'd drop the ballet. They'd take it out of the rep-

crtoire because Clive Barnes didn't like .t' But it sold tickets! In my opinion, it was a wonderful ballet. It was wonderful for me personally, too, because the ballet was 52 minutes .ong and I never left the stage! And I enjoyed the creative process in the studio, where the ballet worked much, much better than it did on the stage. I lost a certain amount of intimacy on the stage. Certain ballets work better in the studio, but unfortunately ballets are made for the stage, not the studio.

"Personally, I don't care about reviews. After I left Joffrey, I had my own company for 13 years. I never did get any good reviews. The critic is just one person. He's not an authority. Why should I care what Clive Barnes thinks about a ballet? He was an alcoholic and about two hundred pounds overweight, yet he passed judgement Now, if it wasn't for him, I wouldn't have made the kind of money I made when I just started, because he really liked me and gave me wonderful personal reviews. Clive Barnes was very generous to me. I'm a personal friend of his, but I still said to his face that I have a problem with critics, especially those who aren't themselves dancers

Some months after Dorian Gray tumbled to his death, Dennis Wayne himself came perilously close to extinction. At four o'clock in the morning, on September 17, 1972, Wayne and live-in lover (and fellow dancer) Bonnie Mathis were awakened in their apartment by an intruder brandishing a knife. He stabbed Mathis, then viciously fought Wayne until the dancer grabbed a gun

"He was a maniac, incredibly strong, and I knew I was losing and was going to



nate.y with the Joffrey Ballet. Dancers Dennis Wayne (left) and Dermot whenever they'd get a bad review Burke (right) both played Dorian Gray in the from Clive Barnes, they'd drop the Joffrey Ballet's 1972 DOUBLE EXPOSURE.

die Well, I had a gun. I shot him. I didn't try to kill him, but I wanted to wound him enough to overcome him. The minute I did, he stopped fighting and gave up. I asked why he'd done what he done, but he never answered. Even later, in court, he never answered. I don't know to this day"

Wayne's wounds were far more serious than those suffered by Mathis. He was stabbed in the left lung, almost dying as a result, and the torn muscles in his right thigh took eight months to heal. The experience profoundly changed his life

"Getting stabbed was nothing compared to what it did to my mind. I'd never hurt anyone before in my life, but I fought like an animal I m a dancer, not an animal and afterwards I found it hard to reconcile the two parts of myself into one picture of Dennis Wayne."

A dancer's career is often brief. His life revolves around his own body. Dorian's desire to remain forever young and beautiful must surely touch a cord with anyone whose livelihood, whose passion, depends on youth. Dennis Wayne, who had come so near death at such an early age, who had con barely hesitated when he was asked if, given the opportunity to have a portrait that would age in his stead, he would take it

"Oh, I'd do that tomorrow! Absolutely! I'm one of those rare people who would love to live for a thousand years. Most of my friends think I'm crazy, but I can t lie—if I had a photograph that aged instead of me, I'd opt for that tomorrow Especially if my body didn't age..."

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#### **COCKTAILS FOR FOUR**

Continued from page 67

SIX BLOCKS ON THE CAMINO REAL, in which Hatfield

brilliantly embodied the spirit of Lord Byron.

I wish a producer had been present that long-ago day to give Curtis Harrington, Elizabeth Shepherd, and Hurd Hatfield the script and the glory that they so very richly deserved. Still, there was at least one positive outcome of that meeting: eventually, Elizabeth Shepherd and I did an audio track [perhaps the first ever] for TOMB OF LIGEIA, I've also prepared a video interview with Piper Laurie to accompany Curtis Harrington's Director's Cut DVD of RUBY (1977). And I was privileged to write the obituary for Hurd Hatfield for Cinefantastique magazine.

#### NIGHT OF DARK SHADOWS

Continued from page 19

Glenn Erickson, the editor responsible for restoring the ending to KISS ME DEADLY (1955), generously offered his services to inspect the negative and other additional materials at the archives. While the negative also contained the 94-minute version, records and paperwork indicated a print running three reels longer resided in MGM's preservation vault, located deep in a Kansas City salt pit. After pulling some strings, Gross succeeded in getting authorization to have the longer print shipped to the Burbank vault.

"Glenn and I went in again and inspected it, and discovered it was indeed the longer cut. Glenn measured the film in order to calculate an accurate running time. The version recovered has Dan Curtis's preferred running time of 129 minutes. I inspected the film reel by reel and examined all the audio elements currently preserved in the vaults. Unfortunately, a complete soundtrack does not exist, but 100 minutes of audio elements are currently held, but Jim Pierson has contacted 90% of the cast needed to rerecord dialogue for the restoration and all have responded with enthusiasm and excitement"

Dan Curtis is reportedly excited about the news, as is screenwriter Sam Hall, who was crushed by the film's disastrous recutting "I had given up on ever seeing the complete version years ago I'm completely delighted that this version has been found. It'll be great to have a version out there that actually makes sense!"

"The 129-minute version is a Gothic masterpiece," enthuses Gross. "The characters are more satisfyingly developed, the acting is top-notch, and several scare sequences are even stronger. The legendary climactic séance sequence is a wonderfully haunting set piece, beautifully photographed and edited."

The current plan is to rerecord the missing sections, re mix the sound and effects tracks, and completely restore the film under the direction and supervision of Darren Gross with DCP acting as producers Dan Curtis Productions and Turner are currently in negotiations towards that end.

#### BELIEVE IN BELIEVE

Continued from page 25

Tinnell, a budding auteur who conceived as well as directed KIDS OF THE ROUND TABLE, FRANKENSTEIN AND ME, and BELIEVE, serves as a harsh critic of his own work. Despite the praise heaped on the feature by fans and critics, he admits sometimes that it's difficult for him to watch some of his work. But he's happy with BELIEVE, in part because the production wasn't marred by battles between the director and his producers, as was the case with films such as FRANKENSTEIN AND ME. The only limits placed on Tinnell this time around were monetary—he had to bring in the picture on a \$2 million budget and a 20-day shooting schedule. To his credit BELIEVE looks like a much more expensive film.

"There was very little interference and a tremendous amount of support," Tinnell said. "There are problems with it—but it's what it was intended to be and that's gratitying

o me.

The DVD, available from Avalanche Entertainment for \$19.99, features a flawless, letterboxed transfer of the film along with the original theatrical trailer, scene access, Spanish subtitles, cast and crew bios, and nifty animated menus. The letterboxing is especially important, since BE LIEVE did not receive a theatrical release in the United States. The home VHS release of the film, also from Avalanche, is panned and scanned. The DVD, therefore, is the only way most Americans have to view the film in its intended aspect ratio.

#### SCREEN

#### Continued from page 29

Bonnie Graham (Deborah Walley) and Steve Gordon (John Ashley) share a similar on again, off-again relationship. Bonnie, like Frankie, tends more toward promiscuity. Steve, however, mirrors Dee

Dee's passive-aggressiveness.

Aside from the dysfunctional dynamic of that foursome, Beach buffs will find an Altmanesque assemblage of subplots. Bullets (Paul Lynde) stages phony events to ballyhoo his protegee, songbird Sugar Kane (Linda Evans, surprisingly effective at lip-syncing vocals supplied by Robin "Wonderful Summer" Ward) Bonehead (Jody McCrea) discovers Lorelei (Marta Kristen), a beautiful mermaid who occasionally trades her tail for human legs. In a movie that boasts the labyrinthine complexity of BEACH BLANKÉT BINGO, the notion of a mermaid walking among hu mankind is but one of many plot threads, no more important than the ill-fated plot of Eric Von Zipper (Harvey Lembeck) to kidnap Sugar Kane

The series' frequent costars, including Don Rickles, Donna Loren, Buster Keaton, and Bobbi Shaw, contribute their expected functions. Joining the festivities are a self-satirizing Timothy Carey (who briefly frugs so that we won't notice the absence of Candy Johnson) and columnist Earl Wilson as himself The journalist's participation may well represent the finest cinematic performance in Wilson's career. He was self-conscious and stiff in COLLEGE CONFIDENTIAL (1960) and NIGHT OF EVIL (1962), but director William Asher has coaxed the clown out of him. Learning that Sugar has been imprisoned in the old sawmill, Wilson's exclamation "It's Pearl White, revisited!" is arguably the picture's wittiest one-liner.

BEACH BLANKET BINGO doesn't rad ically stray from the series formula, dust ing off a de rigueur speeded up motor cycle chase. The musical numbers are par for the beach, except for Frankie's Perry Como-styled ballad "These Are the Good Times." Visually, The Hondells' guitars and organ accompaniment is wonderfully inappropriate, given the soundtrack's schmaltzy string arrangement. The film's editing is choppier than usual, jumping between locations with little transition.

MGM's DVD, presented in 2.35-1 widescreen format only, displays lustrous col ors that embarrass previous TV and VHS prints. The transfer is gorgeous, with only occasional speckles or reel change markmgs. Annette's solo "I'll Never Change Him" is mysteriously missing, similar to other recent editions. A matted (1:85-1) tra.ler is the only supplement, but it includes an unused closeup of a teary Donna Loren at the conclusion of her vocal weeper "It Only Hurts When I Cry." ---John F. Black

#### **BARON BLOOD** Image Entertainment \$24.99

Image continues their fine restoration of obscure horror in this newest addition to the Mario Bava collection

American Peter Kleist (Antonio Cantofora) returns to his ancestral home in Austria, referred to as "Castle of the Devils" ("It's good for the tourists," replies one character), which is being restored for sale at auction. There he meets Eva Arnold (Elke Sommer), who is aiding in the restoration. After learning the bloody family history, Peter and Eva call up the spirit of Peter's evil ancestor, Baron Von Kleist, using a spell created by the witch who damned the Baron centuries prior. A skulking, mutilated figure crawls from his grave and goes on a killing spree. Joseph Cotten pops up midway through the film as Alfred Becker, a wheelchair-bound man who buys the castle. (Guess who turns out to be the resuscitated Baron?

The film has few surprises storywise. Still, BARON BLOOD is a fine example of Bava's style, in which he returned to the Gothic style after the violent excesses of TWITCH OF THE DEATH NERVE (1971), the film that inspired such films as FRI-

DAY THE 13TH (1980)

Stelvio Cipriani 's background score is at times most laughingly inappropriate (turning the film at times into an easy-listening travelogue), but Bava's imagery is so strong that it truly makes one uneasy

with the surroundings

Image's letterbox DVD is very sharp. The colors saturate the screen with a vibrancy that is, if anything, sharper than the old Movie lab prints that AIP released theatrically. The mono sound is good. Extras include the original theatrical trailer (amazing what they got away with using the old GP rating—the trailer features the most violent scene of the picture), filmographies for Sommer and Cotten, a Bava filmography and biography for Bava by Tim Lucas, and a gallery of press pics and posters. ("The management disclaims any responsibility for patrons who suffer . . . cerebral hemorrhages ....")

-Kevin G. Shinnick

#### RUBY VCI Home Entertainment \$19.99

For the past 20 years, RUBY (1977) has been available only in a heavily cut TV version. Most of the violence was removed and replaced with scenes involving the town sheriff, a character only mentioned in the original cut. Curtis Harrington, the director, was so dismayed by this version that he had his name removed from the print. Happily, the theatrical cut is back, thanks to VCI

The move opens with a short prologue set in Florida, 1935. A pregnant Ruby Clair (Piper Laurie), a gangster's moll, witnesses her lover, Nicky (Sal Vecchio), being shot to death by the other members

of their mob. She promptly gives birth.
"Sixteen Years Later," and Ruby now owns a drive-in, but she's still haunted by visions of that fateful night. She employs the surviving members of the gang, who have all gone straight Ruby is considering committing her daughter Leslie (Janit Baldwin) who has never spoken a word, but apart from that and Ruby's frequent nightmares, things have been running smoothly. That's about to change. One



night the projectionist is strangled by the film he's showing. Ruby thinks it's sui-cide, but Vince (Stuart Whitman), her right-hand man and lover, suspects something much more sinister. As the ex mobsters continue dying in bizarre ways, Vince calls in parapsychologist Dr. Keller (DARK SHADOWS veteran Roger Davis) to investigate. Keller thinks Leslie's trauma is providing a physical outlet for Nicky to exact his revenge from beyond

RUBY is a perfect example of what a skilled director can do on a limited budget The cast is well chosen and along with the direction and score, make this an effective little chiller that ends on a low key, romantic note—except for the last few seconds. That final, tacky "shock" was forced on Harrington and is not what

he had in mind at all.

VCI continues to match the high stan dards they set with last year's Mario Bava discs Aside from a few soft shots, the print is extremely sharp and clear. The colors are well balanced and strong when called for, especially in the case of Ruby's ruby dresses and the neon of the drive-in. There are a few damaged frames, but they're minor and much less distracting than the cut version we've had to put up

with all these years.

The extras alone are worth the purchase price. The commentary track features both Curtis Harrington and Piper Laurie There are several slow spots, but the comments become more frequent as the film moves along, and are interesting and at times very funny. Both partici pants obviously like and respect each other and that makes for a warm and honest track. And where else are you going to learn that Piper Laurie has never worn a turban before or after RUBY? The highlight is the video interview with Harring ton, conducted by Scarlet Street's David Del Valle. Simply put, this is the best interview yet featured on DVD. Add the usual bios, photo gallery, and one typi cally trashy seventies trailer, and you have the best restoration and DVD of the summer

-Ron Morgan



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